

EXCLUSIVE Q&A

# PETER DUMBRECK

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

## MOTORSPORT NEWS

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**The flying Scotsman tackles the MN readers' questions, page 20**

M-Sport man takes 80th career victory with eighth Monaco win

## LOEB SNATCHES SENSATIONAL LAST-GASP MONTE GLORY



Loeb snatched dramatic win for M-Sport's Puma



Ogier (l) was gracious in defeat

**By Graham Lister**

Sebastian Loeb produced the ultimate comeback drive to win a thrilling Monte Carlo Rally for M-Sport as the World championship's new hybrid era began in dramatic fashion.

In doing so the nine-time champion, whose last WRC appearance was in Turkey in September 2020, drew level with Sebastian Ogier at the top all-time Monte winners' list.

Ogier was set for a ninth Monte win with a 24.6s lead heading to the penultimate stage. But a front-left puncture proved costly for the Toyota Yaris driver, who slipped 9.5s behind with just the nine-mile Powerstage remaining.

A 10-second penalty for a jumped start then effectively widened that gap to 19.5s. Despite Ogier's storming drive, Loeb took M-Sport's all-new Ford Puma Rally1 to victory by 10.5s.

It was Loeb's 80th WRC win and the first for his new co-driver Isabelle Galmiche, who became the first woman since Fabrizia Pons in 1997 to win a WRC event.

Irishman Craig Breen completed the podium in a second M-Sport Ford Puma after learning prior to the start that Northern Ireland's WRC to join the 2022 WRC calendar had failed.

**Full report pages 14-15**

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NEWS**

### RETRO

#### THE BTCC'S STARS THAT SHONE BRIEFLY

We look back at tin-tops' one-time winners **p18**



### SPECIAL INVESTIGATION

#### FINDING THE LIMIT FOR UK RACERS

How track extremes cause controversy **p31**



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## COMMENT

Photos: M-Sport, Toyota Gazoo Racing, Motorsport Images



Sebastien Loeb rolled back the years with a last-gasp win on the Monte Carlo Rally

## BATTLE OF THE GRAND MASTERS

**A**lmost overlooked in the build-up to the World Rally Championship's new hybrid era was the actual competition itself, but as soon as the engines sparked into life in the south of France last week the fight was on, and what a battle it was.

Two of the sport's finest – the men who have shared 17 of the last 18 World Rally Championship titles between them – went toe-to-toe. Sebastien Ogier and Loeb fought an epic fight at the head of the pack and shared the majority of the stage wins between them. Loeb's victory, his eighth on the classic event, was taken when his countryman suffered a heart-breaking puncture with just a handful of miles left.

In truth, the two WRC grandees were head and shoulders above the others and it is just a regret that neither of them will hang around for a full campaign over the rest of the 12 rounds of the 2022 campaign.

It was an incredible 80th win for 47-year-old Loeb, whose last top-flight triumph was in Spain in 2018. Credit must also go to his new co-driver Isabelle Galmiche, who became the first female co-driver to claim victory on the Monte since 1997.

Aside from the pitched battle for top spot, the other heart-warming aspect of the curtain-raiser was the performance of the Rally1 M-Sport Ford Pumas as a whole. Irishman Craig Breen's run to third place showed great maturity and Gus Greensmith was a stage winner in the Cumbrian designed and developed machine. The Puma has the headline pace of the fastest cars in the service park and it showed the reliability to vanquish the rest. This could be a very rewarding series for the men and women from Cockermouth.

As well as the full report, Nick Garton takes an in-depth look at the start of the WRC's new hybrid era as part of our reflection on the WRC opener.

Elsewhere in this issue, we pick out our favourite one-time British Touring Car Championship race winners who are part of the group of 50 who have now taken a single success (so far).

The subject of our Q&A this week is Peter Dumbreck, a man who seemed destined for Formula 1 until the opportunities ran dry. He is well remembered for his flip into the trees at Le Mans in 1999, but there is much, much more to the Fife man's career than just that moment. He tackles the readers' posers and it starts on page 20.

Graham Keilloh conducts a special investigation into the abuse of track limits in UK racing and looks at the options to stamp out the problem. It is a very divisive issue and one that has focused the mind of many of the sport's experts.

Also, Motorsport News need your help: check out page 17 to help uncover the most missed national racing series. Your vote counts.

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NEWS

ISSUE MJ3318 JANUARY 27 2022

## IN THIS ISSUE

**P14**

## Putting on a show in Monaco

The WRC curtain-raiser serves up a modern-day classic

**P18**The  
BTCC's  
best  
one-hit  
heroes

We look at the talents who shone – but all too briefly...

**P20**Readers' Q&A:  
Peter Dumbreck

The Scottish ace who conquered Macau – but not Le Mans...

**P26**A revolution  
in rallying  
40 years ago

We look back at another tide turning for the World Rally Championship in 1982

News: Racing	4
News: Rallying	7
News: Historics	13
Report: Monte Carlo Rally	14
Insight: Hybrid WRC	16
MN Poll: We need your vote	17
Feature: BTCC's one-hit winners	18
Q&A: Peter Dumbreck	20
Retro: Monte Carlo 1982	26
Investigation: track limits	31
Column: Max Esterson	34
What's on/readers photos	35

**P31**

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION: Track limits traumas

FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P35



# RACING NEWS

## IN BRIEF

### No flying displays for Formula 1

Formula 1 has axed military air displays at grands prix on sustainability and environmental grounds to keep the sport in line with its aims of being carbon neutral by 2030. There is also a concern that the displays could be used to make political statements. It is thought displays such as the RAF's Red Arrows will be permitted as they are less obviously linked to the military.

### Red Bull deal for powertrain man

Red Bull's new director of powertrains, Ben Hodgkinson, will join the Milton Keynes team from May after an agreement between his new employer and his former squad Mercedes. Red Bull is developing its own powertrain as Honda withdrew from F1 at the end of 2021.

### Formula E to be shown on C4

Channel 4 will broadcast the upcoming Formula E season as the first in a multi-year deal. All 16 races will be shown free-to-air. "FE is a fantastically exciting sport and this deal is wonderful news for sports fans," said C4's head of sport Pete Andrews. "We're proud to be showcasing a sport with sustainability and one that plays a role in seeking to combat the climate crisis."

### F2 line-ups for 2022 are confirmed

Briton Jake Hughes has joined Van Amersfoort for this season's Formula 2 contest. The 27-year-old has made sporadic appearances in F2 for HWA over the last two seasons including finishing fourth in Sochi in Russia last year. He joins FIA F3 graduate Amaury Cordeel in the Dutch team. ART has confirmed that Mercedes junior Frederik Vesti will join Theo Pourchaire in its line-up.

# NO FEARS OVER F1 STARS ENTERING AUSTRALIA

## Talks with Formula 1, organisers and the government will give race the green light

Photos: Motorsport Images

By Matt James

**Chiefs of the Australian Grand Prix, which is due to be the third round of the 2022 Formula 1 season on April 10, are confident that there will be no visa issues with racers entering the country.**

Tennis star Novak Djokovic was embroiled in a controversy with the country's government in the build-up to the recent Australian Open tennis tournament that ultimately led to his visa being revoked.

Australian GP boss Andrew Westacott says the '100% vaccination' event would not suffer a similar fate.

Westacott said: "We've worked very closely with the Victorian government throughout 2021 and in the lead up to 2022," he said. "And of course we've worked very, very closely with Formula 1."

"The rules are simple to get into the country and the rules are simple



Bosses are confident that the grand prix runners will return to the reworked Albert Park in 2022

to operate in Formula 1. To come in for the event you'll be 100% vaccinated and there won't be exemptions sought for anyone, from anyone.

"Formula 1 has recognised around the world that they always need to comply with the rules at the borders for the jurisdictions in which they race. They've raced in 41 locations

since Melbourne in 2020 and we're going to be welcoming them into the country. They know the rules and we're very, very comfortable with that."



FIA chiefs say that the new cars will increase competitiveness

## FIA HEAD PREDICTS A MORE COMPETITIVE GRID IN 2023

Bosses of Formula 1 predict that new grand prix racing aerodynamic rules will even up the time differential between the fastest and the slowest machines on the grid.

The 2022 regulations mean a return to ground effect cars in an effort to enable drivers to run closer to each other and encourage overtaking. The FIA's head of single-seater matters Nikolas Tombazis says that once teams have some knowledge of the new machines, the pack will be more competitive.

Tombazis said: "I think that currently the best to worst [team gap] is probably about three seconds, depending on the circuit. I hope that, after maybe a year, we will have this less than half of that. That is

what I would hope, but we'll have to see."

The wraps will come off the first of the new-look machines when Aston Martin and McLaren reveal their 2022 challengers on February 10 and February 11 respectively.

"When I was looking at some old championships, and I read recently that we once had 11 winners in a year and you could win a championship with a few wins," said Tombazis. "I'm not saying we're going to get to that point, but to have more variability would be good. Also to have people who can genuinely follow closer for longer periods, and not overheat the tyres, and still be able to fight for prolonged periods, I think that would be quite exciting."



Prost: parted from Alpine F1

## PROST UPSET AT ALPINE F1 EXIT

Four-time F1 World champion Alain Prost has blamed internal politics at Alpine for him leaving the squad as a consultant.

The 66-year-old says the attitude of Alpine boss Laurent Rossi had pushed him to the fringes of the team, which ran as the rebranded Renault F1 entry from 2021 in recognition of the French firm's sportscar arm.

Prost told French newspaper L'Equipe: "Laurent Rossi's desire is to be alone, not to be polluted by anyone. He told me he no longer needed advice. There is a real desire to put a lot of people on the sidelines."

"I was no longer involved in the decisions. Sometimes I did not even share in them at all but I had to continue to put out the official word."

"Even as a member of the board of directors, I discovered certain decisions at the last minute. One might not be able to be heard, but at least one should be warned in time. It's a question of respect. Relations became more and more complicated. I felt that there was a lot of jealousy."

Alpine won a race last season when Esteban Ocon prevailed in Hungary and it finished fifth in the constructors' championship chase.

## FRESH UNCERTAINTY OVER 2022 FORMULA 1 SPRINT EVENTS

McLaren boss Zak Brown has revealed that F1 teams are at loggerheads over introducing an expanded roster of sprint qualifying events in 2022.

The original plan was to boost the number of Saturday events from three to six this term but Brown revealed that a number of teams were pushing for an increase on the

£103 million budget cap.

Brown explained: "A couple of teams, and one team in particular, wanted a \$5m budget cap increase, which was just ridiculous."

"And [there were] no rational facts behind it. When you challenged them, they go to 'what if' and 'could' and 'you've got to anticipate'."

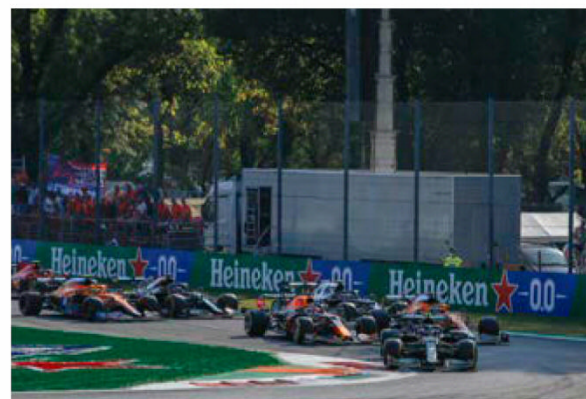
You sit there and go 'This is just nonsense.'"

Any change in the upcoming season's rules need eight teams to agree and that could lead to a delay to sprint races in 2022. If five teams concur, then rules could be implemented for the year ahead in 2023.

Brown said F1 should vote

through 2023 sprint qualifying first and then try to agree on this season.

"Maybe there can be a compromise raised and we raise it a little bit, and we start in 2022 or we skip 2022," said Brown, "and a couple of these teams should have to explain to the fans why there is no sprint races."



Sprint races could be out for 2022...



The Hyundai racer thinks he can capitalise on driver changes

## INGRAM AIMS TO STEP FORWARD WITH NEW BTCC DEAL

British Touring Car Championship racer Tom Ingram says he is desperate to shake-off the 'nearly man' tag as he has confirmed a return to the tin-top series with Excelr8 Motorsport's Hyundai i30N.

Ingram has been in the BTCC since 2014 and has finished second and third in the standings. Last year, in his first with Excelr8, he took three wins on his way to fourth in the points. He says a number of team swaps

by rival drivers has given him a golden chance to claim a maiden crown in 2022.

The 28-year-old said: "[With the] benefit of a year's engineering development now under our belts, we should be in good shape going into 2022. Not just that, but with a number of my main rivals playing musical chairs over the off-season, our continuity can only count in our favour."

"The advent of the hybrid era is very exciting. It will

open up a new dynamic, and there will be an extra strategic element in terms of when and how you exploit the additional power available, which will give us all a bit more to think about."

"It really could be the most unpredictable season in ages, but our goal is clear. I've been the BTCC's 'nearly man' too many times for my liking. Off the back of such a strong first year at Excelr8 and with the new hybrid technology, I've never felt so motivated."



Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Many licence holders feel standards have dropped



Chambers says it's "an imperative" that Motorsport UK acts

# DRIVING STANDARD FALL IN MOTORSPORT UK SURVEY

## Governing body vows to act before season start after survey shows "very large proportion" perceive decline

By Graham Keilloh

A Motorsport UK survey has confirmed a "very large proportion" of UK circuit racers believe that driving standards have slipped on the country's tracks in recent years.

The governing body sent an email questionnaire to its circuit racing licence holders as part of its wider initiative on the issue of driving standards, which was also the subject of a recent special Motorsport News investigation (see MN, January 6). Motorsport UK in response to the finding

aims to have a programme in place by the season start.

Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers told MN: "There's feedback from the community that they have seen a worsening of the behaviour and it's some people some of the time [who are responsible].

"We had a very good response to [the survey], and it confirmed our concerns which is that a very large proportion of our community do feel that driving standards have deteriorated in the last few years and we therefore feel it's an imperative that we take some actions to address that.

"There are things that we can do in terms of education, communication to the community, the judicial system and the way in which people are penalised.

"One of the first things that we did was with the licence renewals this year, in my letter to

all of the licence holders [we] included a simple card about the code of conduct that everybody signs up to.

"It's a programme which is work in progress and something that we would have in place by the time the season proper starts."

## ASSETTO EXPANDS TO BRITISH GT3 WITH BENTLEY

Aspetto Motorsport will add the GT3 contest to its British GT effort this year with a Bentley Continental driven by Mark Sansom and former factory driver Andy Meyrick.

Aspetto 12 months ago expanded from Ginetta's one-make series to run the then-new G56 in British GT4, with Sansom

paired with Ginetta factory pilot Charlie Robertson. Only a late-race puncture denied the Pro-Am pair debut victory at Brands Hatch. It was confirmed earlier this month that youngsters Freddie Tomlinson and Joe Wheeler will race Aspetto's G56 in British GT4 this year.

This season will be Sansom's

first full campaign in something other than a Ginetta after rising through the manufacturer's G40 and GT4 ranks with Aspetto.

Sansom said: "GT3 has always been an aspiration, although I wasn't expecting the opportunity to arise so soon. [I have] worked with Aspetto, Bentley and M-Sport on this for some months.

"Last season GT4 gave me a great grounding in GT endurance racing. The extra downforce in GT3 should suit my driving style. The car is beautifully engineered and a proven package in the right hands. And Andy has a huge amount of experience at the highest level and in the Bentley for us to draw on."



Aspetto is adding a GT3 Bentley to its 2022 British GT attack

## DOMINANT WHITE BACK FOR FIVE-STAR TITLE

Ginetta's first-ever four-time class champion Colin White will shoot for title number five this season after confirming he'll continue in the GT4 Supercup.

Reigning class champion White will enter his 13th season of one-make Ginetta racing this year with his own CWS Motorsport outfit. He took the Am class crown in 2015 and '16, and won Pro-Am honours in both of the last two seasons. Last year he claimed 17 victories in the 23-race campaign.

White has also already sampled the Supercup's new-for-2022 Ginetta G56 GT4 in the British GT championship and 24H Series.

White said: "The new car has a lot more power in a straight line than the G55, but you must be careful with how you drive it to look after the tyres. I'll be up against a lot of good competitors this season, but I want to win the Pro-Am title again."



White: looking for a high five

Impressive debut effort back for more



## ENDURO EYES TITLE CHARGE ON BRITISH GT '22 RETURN

Marcus Clutton and Am racer Morgan Tillbrook will aim for a British GT title tilt this season.

They have confirmed an unchanged McLaren 720S GT3 line-up with their Enduro Motorsport effort.

In the duo's full debut campaign last year, Tillbrook and Clutton won Donington Park's finale. It topped off a season where they showed consistently strong pace. For 2022 they return with

a newly liveried 720S.

Clutton, who hadn't completed a full-season British GT programme since winning 2011's GT4 crown, also oversees Enduro's day-to-day running. The team has recently purchased a second 720S for customer activities.

Clutton said: "I love racing and, I think, proved last year that I still have what it takes to take on the big boys. But I get just as much pleasure from managing the

operation, even if it can be difficult to juggle.

"Things should be more straightforward this year now the foundations are in place and we've got a season under our belts.

"That's also why we've acquired the second McLaren – ultimately we want to develop Enduro into a customer racing business that's capable of supporting multiple GT racing programmes."

## MASON AND LANCASTER CONFIRM GT CUP RETURN

Greystone GT's maiden race-winning duo Rich Mason and GP2 race-victor Jon Lancaster will return with the team for a full GT Cup championship campaign this year.

The pair in GT Cup's GTH class took the team's first win at Silverstone last year in their distinctively liveried McLaren 570S GT4, and will continue in the same car for the full season this year.

Recent Gulf 12 Hours GT4 winner Greystone GT will also have in its multi-car line-up Phillip Carter and Michael Broadhurst, who made a

one-off appearance with the team last year, stepping up to a full-time GTH-class GT Cup programme in 2022.

European Le Mans Series champion Lancaster said: "If Rich can make as big a step as he did across the 2021 season then we'll be in the mix for podiums, and this should be our target anyway. Rich has really stepped up his commitment to his racing this winter, both with his fitness and his training on the sim. He knows what he has to do and we'll be there every step of the way to help him."

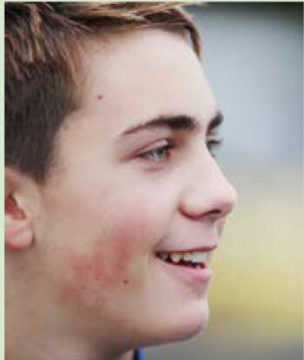


Lancaster (l) and Mason are looking for GT Cup podiums



# RACING NEWS

Photos: RWillsmore Photography, Jakob Ebrey, Euroformula Open



## Pearson: first in PEARSON JOINS BRITISH F4 WITH VIRTUOSI

Famous junior single-seater outfit Virtuosi Racing has confirmed its first driver signing for its maiden British Formula 4 campaign this year as Ginetta Junior graduate Edward Pearson.

The 15-year-old from Guildford last year racing with Richardson Racing finished 17th in Ginetta Junior's standings and took his maiden category podium in the Brands Hatch season finale.

Pearson said: "To join such a prestigious team for my first steps on the FIA single-seater pathway is only a benefit for me.

"I'm no stranger to a high level of competition, having raced on the BTCC support package, but I'm aware this will be a new challenge, but one I'm ready to face head on. The car is fantastic, and I can't wait to get the racing underway."

Virtuosi's British F4 team manager Mark Salmon added: "Edward last year showed great potential and gained a good knowledge of all the circuits on the 2022 British F4 race calendar."



New contest will match UK 116 Trophy's regulations

# 116 TROPHY SET FOR CONTINENTAL SISTER SERIES STARTING AT SPA

## Racers in the affordable endurance contest to get opportunities to compete abroad

By Graham Keilloh

**The 116 Trophy low-cost BMW 116i endurance series is set for a sister contest based in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium starting with a combined Spa meeting in August.**

The mainland Europe series

is headed by Cees Prins, chief operating officer at Circuit Meppen in Germany. Its opener is planned for Spa in August followed by a meeting at 'home track' Meppen.

The UK and mainland Europe series will use the same rules and cars so racers in either can compete in the other. In addition the Baltic

Touring Car Championship has added a 116 Trophy class for 2022.

Prins told Motorsport News: "We are a Dutch company, called Driving-Fun, we are Europe's biggest trackday organisation. We are just missing an affordable racing class with a lot of driving time."

"I was in contact with Ben Wilshire from Driven

International and I saw that he is driving in this class [116 Trophy], so I thought 'hey this is interesting'. We have some racing classes over here but not with a lot of driving time; when you're young you need to drive a lot to gain experience."

UK 116 Trophy coordinator Mark Bate added to MN: "It makes

the [UK] series larger. If we can both race together on a level playing field that's the key; I'm over the moon with that. I can see other smaller European countries maybe taking it on [too], Portugal for instance. The future for the Trophy is as bright as anything. It shows how good this country is at developing things."



UK series "made larger" by move

# RACE WINNER PEARCE BACK FOR MORE MINI TROPHY GLORY

Mini Challenge Trophy race-winner Lee Pearce has confirmed he will continue in the championship in 2022 with Motorwise Motorsport and is looking for regular silverware.

It will be 38-year-old Pearce's third full campaign in the contest. Last year he took a dramatic photo-finish victory in Snetterton's opening meeting, then ended a tough run of mid-

season form by winning again during the year's penultimate meeting at Thruxton. That made Pearce one of only four drivers to win multiple Trophy races last season.

Pearce said: "Last season was one of ups and downs for me, and unfortunately we had a run of bad luck. However [the wins] showed we have the pace to be at the front."

Jonny Sargeant has also confirmed he will continue in the Mini Challenge Trophy this year, in his case with Excelr8 Motorsport for his second season.

The 23-year-old said: "Excelr8 offered me a huge amount of support last year, and I was able to learn a huge amount. My aim [for 2022] would be to try and fight towards the middle of the field."



Mini Trophy racer Pearce has pace to win in third year



Monza podium finisher Mansell (l) steps up for a full-time Euroformula effort in 2022

# MANSELL GOES AND GRUNDTVIG STAYS IN GB3

GB3 race-winner Christian Mansell will step up to a full campaign in the Euroformula Open this season with the CryptoTower Racing Team run by Motopark.

The 16-year-old Australian finished third in GB3's standings last season with two wins for Carlin, and also that year made a handful of Euroformula appearances, split between Carlin and Motopark, taking a best finish of second at Monza.

Mansell said: "Joining them [CryptoTower Racing] for the coming season was a no-brainer. Stepping up to Euroformula Open full-time was the logical next step for me. With a solid pre-season test programme there is no reason why we shouldn't hit the ground running and be in the mix for the title."

Meanwhile Mansell's fellow 2021 GB3 race-winner Mikkel Grundtvig is remaining in the British contest this year for a

second season with Fortec Motorsports.

The 19-year-old Dane also claimed two wins last year, following a season racing in his homeland due to Covid restrictions, wherein he became Danish Endurance champion.

Grundtvig said: "2021 was a crazy year in all aspects but the most I've learned in my career so far. I will take all my experiences with me and even more for this season."

# FOSTER GETS INDY PRO 2000 RIDE WITH CHAMPION TEAM

Rising British star Louis Foster will race full-time in America this year in Indy Pro 2000 with champion team Exclusive Autosport.

The 18-year-old finished second in the Euroformula Open championship last year in his first season outside the UK, and during 2021 relocated Stateside for his studies and racing.

The Indy Pro 2000 series is the second rung on the Road to Indy ladder climbing to IndyCar. Foster, with Exclusive Autosport, set the quickest Indy Pro 2000 time in last year's post-season Chris Griffis Memorial test on the Indianapolis road course, and he now joins the team to fight for the

2022 title. The campaign will also involve Foster racing on ovals for the first time.

Exclusive Autosport won the Indy Pro 2000 teams' championship last year and its drivers placed second and fourth in the standings.

Foster said: "I'm really happy with how the Indianapolis test went and if that's a reflection of how our year could go, I'm really looking forward to the challenge."

"The team is really friendly and well organised, and I'm excited to work with them more in the off-season to build on what we've achieved already."



Foster: American dream



# RALLY NEWS

# LOEB UNSURE ON M-SPORT FUTURE DESPITE MONTE CARLO SUCCESS

## French legend's triumph could be his only top-flight outing in '22 World Rally Championship

Photos: M-Sport, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



A rarity: this could be Loeb's only WRC outing



Loeb and new co-driver Galmiche secured a dramatic last-minute victory

### M-SPORT'S MONTE WINNERS



**2006:** Marcus Gronholm wins to hand the Ford Focus RS WRC a maiden WRC victory (above)

**2010:** Mikko Hirvonen delivers a Ford Fiesta S2000 first on the IRC-counting Monte

**2017:** Sebastien Ogier scores a perfect debut win with M-Sport, taking the last new-spec World Rally Car to top spot

**2018:** Ogier begins his WRC title defence in style by making it a Fiesta WRC double

**2022:** On his first appearance with M-Sport, Sebastien Loeb gives the new hybrid-era Puma Rally1 a stunning victory

### By Graham Lister

**Sebastien Loeb scored a sensational victory on his M-Sport debut to mark the start of the hybrid-based Rally1 era – but then admitted he didn't know if or when he would return to the British squad for more WRC action.**

Loeb, who quit the World Rally Championship on a full-

time basis at the end of the 2012 season, led M-Sport's four-strong Monte attack and beat Toyota's Sebastien Ogier in a final-stage decider aboard his purple-painted Ford Puma Rally1.

Although Loeb was given permission by his Dakar and Extreme E team Prodrive to contest a "limited programme" of WRC events, M-Sport team principal Richard Millener conceded there are no firm

plans in place for more outings.

"We've always been clear it's one event for now," Millener said in Monaco on Sunday evening. "We wanted to come here to confirm our thoughts on the car and team. Whatever happens, we know we only had one chance to do this and we've done it."

Loeb started the Monte less than a week after finishing second on the Dakar in Saudi Arabia but insisted he was "fresh"

following the World Rally-Raid Championship opener.

"When Dakar is going well, in the middle of the afternoon you are back at the service park – I had quite a good Dakar," the 47-year-old said. "Here, I had a good feeling since the first test and this gave me some confidence. But the result is amazing. It's more than we expected, but the team, and with Isabelle [Galmiche] – everything has

been really amazing [on] our first rally together."

Galmiche, a maths teacher by trade, has been part of Loeb's gravel-note crew in the past but had never previously competed at the sport's level.

"She did it really well," Loeb of Galmiche, the first woman to win a WRC event since Fabrizia Pons in 1997. "It was just one or two times she went a little bit late, but then it was just a little bit. She was

in the perfect rhythm and she understands how to do it really well. She has a lot of experience in French championship, but in the WRC you have a lot more to do around [the car]. She did a great job."

Despite his arduous schedule of late, Loeb will be back in action when he contests the finale of the Andros E-Trophy ice racing series at Super Besse in France on Saturday night.

## NI RALLY CHIEFS CONFIDENT DEAL COULD BE REKINDLED FOR 2023

Hopes of Northern Ireland hosting the World Rally Championship are not over, despite confirmation last week that the event won't go ahead in 2022.

That's the view of Ian Paisley MP, who has told Motorsport News that he's "convinced" efforts to secure a 2023 slot will come to fruition after "centurion" attempts to keep the United Kingdom on rallying's global roster.

Efforts to stage a WRC-counting Rally Northern Ireland this August unravelled last week when it emerged that Motorsport UK had pulled its support of the event.

In a letter to Tourism NI sent last month, the governing body confirmed it was withdrawing its involvement and blamed the lack of financial commitment from the Stormont Executive's Department for the Economy as the main reason.

Motorsport UK has since informed MN that it is on side with plans for another WRC calendar bid in 2023 and will work with Paisley, Rally Northern Ireland promoter Bobby Willis and WRC Promoter to bring World championship rallying back to the British Isles for the first time since 2019.

"Northern Ireland PLC would be certifiably mad if it did not embrace the opportunity to bring the WRC to Northern Ireland," said Paisley, who has been working behind the scenes in pushing the case for Northern Ireland to host the championship.

"This is the pinnacle of rally and to miss an

opportunity like this would be crazy but equally we have to make sure it takes place at the right time and it gets all of the government support and public endorsement that is necessary."

Paisley continued: "I am honest enough to say, 'Listen, we are beaten, it isn't going to happen [in 2022]', but I am also honest enough to say, 'This has potential and this can happen in 2023'. This can and this must happen."

WRC Promoter event director Simon Larkin said: "We were willing to [do a calendar with a TBC] because we wanted to pursue this as much as was needed and to give Bobby as much support, time and effort as we possibly could.

"While [the bid] has not been successful for 2022, the fact that all these critical parties are discussing it and see it as an option for the future, that's a positive. We have so many people fighting to make it happen. It's just unfortunate it didn't come together for this year."

FIA deputy president for sport Robert Reid, the 2001 World champion co-driver, said while no UK round of the WRC was "disappointing", he was adamant that all is not lost but put the onus on Motorsport UK to make the next move.

"The promoter is very clear that they would be very supportive of an event in the UK, but the UK needs to see how they can bring forward a candidate that's suitable for inclusion in the calendar," he said.



Ireland's lanes will not welcome the WRC later this season

### Five in the running for spare WRC slot

No Rally Northern Ireland for 2022 means there's still a 'TBC' on the WRC calendar and not a huge amount of time to fill the vacancy if, as Motorsport News understands, the August 18-21 date is locked-in due to the logistical issues finding an alternative date would create.

WRC Promoter, the championship's commercial rights holder, whose job it is to secure an alternative 13th round, has options – and a track record

of finding calendar solutions – although it is thought none come without complications.

Corsica, Ypres and Monza are thought to be among potential alternatives, while Cyprus, Rally Zlin and Rally Liepaja have also been mentioned as contenders by sources. Reverting to a 12-round calendar could be another option, and one potentially favoured by the teams, albeit not by WRC Promoter due to the loss of revenue.

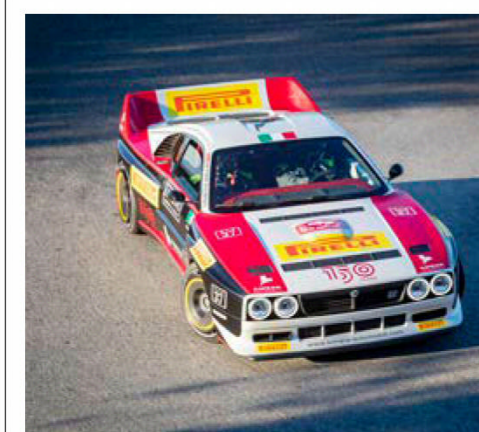
## SOLBERG SWAPS SEATS FOR LANCIA O37 THRILL

Petter Solberg turned co-driver ahead of the Monte Carlo Rally in a Lancia O37 replica.

Solberg, the 2003 World champion, partnered Pirelli's motorsport chief Mario Isola on a demo run through the Monte shakedown stage last Thursday morning.

The outing, in a specially-liveried Kimera Automobili EVO37, kicked-off Pirelli's 150th anniversary celebrations.

"I actually misunderstood, I thought I'd be driving the car, and it was only later that I realised I was going to be co-driving," Solberg said. "So although it's not my familiar place and I don't think my pacenotes were very good though: we did them in the dark the night before, so they weren't exactly Phil Mills standard."



Solberg in the passenger seat



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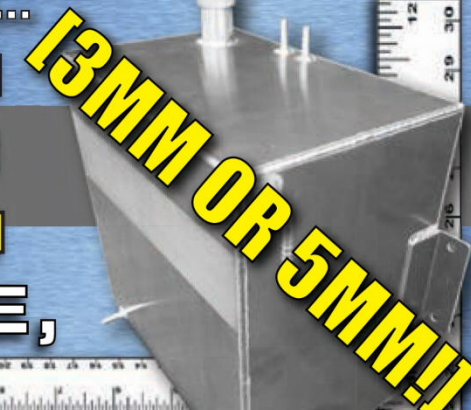
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RALLY NEWS

MILNER READY TO MAKE HER BID FOR WRC GLORY IN FIA RALLY STAR BATTLE

British woman joins four-strong British team in bid for biggest-ever talent search

Photos: Lou Johnston/MSUK, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Milner (l), with Wilson and Bebnowicz-Harris, qualified from the UK selection event at Bicester last year

By Graham Lister

Circuit racer Katie Milner stands on the cusp of winning a World Rally Championship drive – despite believing her hopes of competing in a sport that made her father Jonny a household name were over.

The 22-year-old is part of Motorsport UK’s four-strong team taking part in the FIA Rally Star European Final, which runs from tomorrow (Friday) until Sunday at the Estering rallycross track in northern Germany.

On offer is a place in the 2023 FIA Rally Star Training Season, which includes six rallies in an M-Sport Ford Fiesta Rally3, plus a coaching programme.

The European Final winner would then battle the winners of the five other continental finals scheduled for later this year, plus the winner of an all-female final, for one of four fully-funded Junior WRC drives in 2023.

Both routes are open to Milner – who is one of 89 competitors, 14 of whom are female – in the FIA Rally Star European Final, which she’s contesting ahead of a planned season of circuit racing. The contest brings the Milner name back to rallying after success in circuit racing.

“I’d like to think [I can win],” Milner said. “I’ve not done a great deal driving

cross cars but the whole idea of FIA Rally Star was to pluck someone out with not so much experience. Hopefully I can pull together all the experience I’ve got and come through.

“When I started competing, rallying was always where I wanted to go but I ended up getting sidestepped into racing. But the WRC would definitely appeal, especially being a girl and the fact there hasn’t been one for a long time from my country. It’s time for more females to come to the floor and for me it’s another challenge and something I always wanted to do but never really had the opportunity. I’ve got that opportunity now.”

Milner qualified for the FIA Rally Star European Final through Motorsport UK’s assessment day held at its Bicester HQ last year. Robert Wilson also progressed through the national selection, while John Bebnowicz-Harris was one of 20 winners of the home-based online challenges out of a total of 4147 entrants. George Lepley completes the UK team as a wildcard.

“With Motorsport UK we have done two test days and also run through lots of different scenarios that could come up during the assessments [in Germany],” said Milner. “We also had some fitness sessions to make sure we are up to scratch.”

HOW IT WORKS

Drivers from 22 countries, including the UK, are split into groups for day one (Friday) with each driver getting one reconnaissance run, plus three timed runs in a cross car over Stage 1, which measures some 750 metres in length.

On Saturday, the top three in each group after Stage 1 progress to Stage 2 and get two timed runs of a 1.2-mile test follow a recce.

Drivers not progressing after Stage 1 or Stage 2 can also register for the Digital Challenge, using a modified version of the WRC 9 simulation game, as a last chance means of reaching the next stage of the competition.

Candidates finishing in fourth or fifth in each group after Stage 1 or in positions 11 to 20 in the overall classification after Stage 2 can

win one of the two remaining spots for day three.

Sunday’s Stage 3, measuring approximately 1.8 miles, is for the fastest two drivers from each group, plus the fastest two drivers not topping their group. They will be joined by the two winners of the Digital Challenge. Each driver gets to recce the stage followed by three timed passes.

The stage results and other

performances such as media interviews conducted during the event are then considered by a five-person jury, which decides the overall winner, plus Europe’s female nominee for the 2023 FIA Rally Star Team.

FIA deputy president for sport Robert Reid will chair the jury, which includes Hyundai WRC star Thierry Neuville and M-Sport boss Malcolm Wilson.



Cross cars will provide contenders with their chance for victory

WELSH RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP REWARDS CLUBMEN

The Welsh Rally Championship has secured additional funding for clubman-level competitors this season.

Series partner Ravenol has pledged £200 of its lubricant products to the crew who improves most on their seeding at each event, while a season-long ‘Welsh Challenge’ will mean the most improved competitor of the year receives a trophy and £500.

In addition, the sponsorship will fund livestreaming coverage of all rounds of the Welsh series in 2022, as well as offering a 15% discount on lubricants products to registered competitors.

“We have always supported the clubman in a variety of motorsport disciplines, and we are proud to develop the Ravenol Welsh Challenge even further by offering an event-by-event incentive and a new overall end-of-season cash reward and trophy,” said company boss Brian Chase.



Rallying in Wales to gain extra support for the grassroots competitors

TOP SEEDS ANNOUNCED FOR GALWAY

Alastair Fisher has been given top seeding for next weekend’s Irish Tarmac Rally Championship opener, the Galway International Rally.

The series is restarting for the first time since 2020, when the championship was abandoned after one round due to the Covid pandemic.

Reigning British rally champion Matt Edwards will start at number three and Welsh talent Meirion Evans will also cross the Irish Sea to take part in the classic asphalt event.

As well as announcing the top seeds,

ITRC management declared that plans to introduce a control fuel for the series have been shelved due to potentially losing entries. Galway International Rally clerk of the course Aiden Connolly told MN:

“I got a call from three competitors, who told me if control fuel was going to be introduced in Galway, they would be pulling their entries and concentrating on the national championship. I don’t know how... they would get it over the line in such a short time frame.”

TOP SEEDS

Galway International

SEED	CREW	CAR
1	Alastair Fisher/Gordon Noble	VW Polo GTI R5
2	Callum Devine/Brian Hoy	Ford Fiesta Rally2
3	Matt Edwards/TBA	VW Polo GTI R5
4	Meirion Evans/Jonathan Jackson	VW Polo GTI R5
5	Josh Moffett/Andy Hayes	Hyundai i20 R5
6	Jonny Greer/TBA	Citroen C3 Rally2
7	Cathan McCourt/Liam Moynihan	Ford Fiesta Rally2
8	Donagh Kelly/Kevin Flanagan	VW Polo GTI R5
9	Declan Boyle/James O’Reilly	Ford Fiesta WRC
10	Garry Jennings/Rory Kennedy	Ford Fiesta R5



# RALLY NEWS

## ANDROS TROPHY HEADS TOWARDS FINAL

Five-time champion Dubourg hits form at the right time in supremely competitive ice racing classic

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Andros Trophy



All to play for in Andros finale

By Hal Ridge

**The Andros Trophy ice-racing championship is set to go down to the wire this weekend at Super Besse, with just three points separating the leading contenders.**

A dominant performance from five-time champion Jean-Baptiste Dubourg at Lans En Vercors last weekend lifted the Renault-backed DA Racing team driver back into title contention. The win leaves him tied in second place on points with Yann Ehrlicher and just three points behind series leader and champion, Aurelien Panis.

Sainteloc Racing driver Panis and Muller Racing's Ehrlicher both collected a second-place finish each over the Lans En Vercors double-header, while

Dubourg claimed back-to-back wins and the Super Pole bonus points to put a difficult weekend at Isola 2000 earlier this month behind him. Dubourg's teammate Nicolas Prost also joined him on the podium on Friday evening, while Hyundai WRC refugee Pierre-Louis Loubet also appeared, finishing fourth and sixth in the two rounds.

Heading into the finale, Panis and Ehrlicher have a win each so far this winter. The form man Dubourg has meanwhile claimed the top step four times.

In the Elite class, Jimmy Clairot leads the standings by 14 points over Eddy Benezet ahead of Super Besse, while Natan Bihel, former RX Academy racer Clementine Lhoste and Edgar Maloigne are separated by two points chasing third overall.

### ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Despite missing a time control, Iwan Jones/Neil Spiers ran out as winners of the Bagger 22 with a victory margin of almost eight minutes. The pair had led after the opening sections, but a puncture and the missed control dropped them to third. However, the penalty for missing the TC was only five minutes, so a hard charge through the foggy final sections put them back on top. The result gave navigator Spiers his first win in 27 years.

Reian Jones/Cadog Davies had been in the lead when they bent a bottom arm and had to cut route to reach the Finish. Rich 'Ty Capel' /Alan James had a steady run through the demanding 150-mile event and claimed the runner-up spot.

The drive of the rally came from the 1300cc Nissan Micra of Brendan Wellman/Dan Pigeon. An early clutch problem was solved by the use of WD40 and they finished in third place, two minutes behind Williams/James.

Richard James/Dafydd-Sion Lloyd lost time after hitting a deep patch of water on the opening section, but they recovered to take sixth place. Event-long brake problems hampered Bevan Blacker/Niall Frost and they finished in ninth. Top seeds, Matthew Jones/Richard 'Tyson' Morris failed to finish: they had picked up two punctures and then ended their rally in a ditch.

Ian Mills

#### Bagger 22

**Organiser:** Vintage & Classic Rally Register  
**When:** Jan 15-16 **Where:** Somerset/Devon **Championships:** None **Route:** 150 miles **Starters:** 66.

#### Results

1 Iwan Jones/Neil Spiers (Ford Escort Mk2) 23m55s; 2 Rich 'Ty Capel' Williams/Alan James (Escort) +7m52s; 3 Brendan Wellman/Dan Pigeon (Nissan Micra Super S); 4 James How/Nic Jones (MG ZR); 5 Duncan Williams/Nick Bloxham (Escort); 6 Richard James/Dafydd-Sion Lloyd (MG ZR); 7 Robi Wood/Osian Davies (Ford Focus); 8 Rphillip Luxton/Oliver Luxton (Rover 25); 9 Bevan Blacker/Niall Frost (Peugeot 106); 10 Rob Stephens/Nathan Summers (Mazda MX5).

**Class Winners:** Novices: Martyn Roberts/Iulian Arcus (Toyota Corolla GT).

## WESTGARTH TO SUPERCAR FOR 2022

Mitsubishi driver Bradley Westgarth will graduate to the headline Supercar category in the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy this year.

The 19-year-old last year raced to second in the Retro Rallycross Group B & Four-Wheel-Drive category in his self-prepared Mitsubishi Lancer E6, based on a Group N rally machine he imported in

2019. "I had a great time racing with Steve Harris and Andy Grant despite only having around 330bhp last year," said Westgarth. "For this year we decided just to go for it. [Our] budget means that I'm going to be getting around 520bhp compared to some with around 600bhp but I managed with a big deficit last year so we'll see how much I can challenge in Supercar."



Westgarth will get a big boost in power when he takes the step to Supercar



Eriksson relished Dakar debut and wants more cross-country action in future

## WORLD RX WINNER ERIKSSON WANTS DAKAR RETURN

World Rallycross Championship round-winner Sebastian Eriksson wants further Dakar rally outings following his shock result on the event earlier this month.

Eriksson finished second in the T3 class on his first appearance at the event.

Driving for fellow rallycross driver Mattias Ekstrom's EKS team, and navigated by Wouter Rosegaar, the Dakar was only Eriksson's second cross-country start in any form. In a new partnership with South Racing, EKS campaigned the

new Can-Am Maverick X3 side-by-side cars and claimed a 1-2 finish in the T3 class, with Francisco Lopez winning ahead of the Swede.

"It was incredible to finish second in my first Dakar, it was a dream come true," said an enthusiastic Eriksson.

"It was a tough two weeks; I learned a lot during the race and improved my pace and driving throughout. Wouter helped me a lot and did superb job on the navigation side. I would love to come back and see if we can challenge for the top spot."

## JBRC HOPEFUL ANDERSON HEADS TO IRELAND

Fraser Anderson has entered next week's Galway International Rally as he aims to build up his experience in a Ford Fiesta Rally4 ahead of a Junior British Rally Championship campaign.

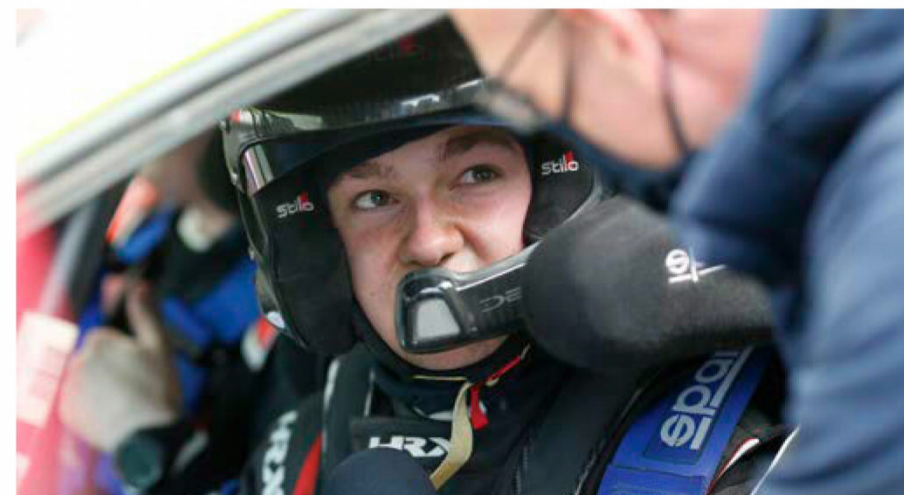
Anderson drove an older Fiesta R2T in BRC Academy last season – his first full year of senior rallying – and tested his new Rally4 last week at Three Sisters race circuit.

"It's actually Finlay

[Retson]'s car from last year, so we've kept it Scottish!" Anderson told MN. "I'm doing Galway [as] I've never been to Ireland or really done much on Tarmac for two years now so we need to get going with that. I've never done a closed-road rally actually, Oulton Park was the last Tarmac rally I did and before that we're going back to the Citroen C1 in juniors so it's a bit different."

The first two rounds of this year's BRC are on asphalt making Galway perfect preparation, where Anderson will also be adapting to a new co-driver, Dylan Doonan.

"The plan has been to do Galway and then maybe West Cork the next month," Anderson added. "We're still waiting to see with that because it's quite expensive going over to Ireland and doing those kinds of events."



Galway bound: Anderson wants to gain experience in Ireland





Pryce has no regrets

## PRYCE WAS GLAD TO GO DOWN FIGHTING IN BRC FINALE

Osian Pryce insists he has no regrets after crashing out of the 2021 British Rally Championship title decider on the penultimate stage of the Ulster Rally.

The Welshman has declared it was an innocent mistake that left his VW Polo on its roof in a field.

Pryce, who finished as runner-up in the BRC for the third time, said: "It is difficult to accept that one small moment has undone everyone's hard work and effort."

"Of all the heart-stopping moments we managed to get away with in the tricky conditions, it had to be the little innocent one that caught us out."

"Having been out of an R5 car for two years and away from the BRC for four, I have to be pleased with the season we've had, and I don't regret anything that's happened. I'd rather be fighting for victory and put the car on its roof than be two minutes behind and not understanding why."

# ORDER RESTORED IN NATIONAL HOT RODS FOR 2022 SEASON

## Major events return to regular calendar slots for new campaign

By Matt James

**The blue riband National Hot Rod events will return to their traditional dates on the 2022 calendar after two years of disruption.**

The showpiece event, the National Hot Rod World Final, will be the highlight of the Spedweekend special that will once again run on the first weekend of July.

The 75-lap event, which takes place at Foxhall Heath in Ipswich, was cancelled in 2019 and was rescheduled to take place in September in 2021, where Scotsman Rob McDonald successfully defended his World crown. This year's edition will take place on July 2-3.

The second half of the 2021-2022 English points chase, which is currently being headed by Vauxhall Tigra driver Billy Wood after the six rounds that have been completed so far, will resume at Ipswich on March 5.

The contest will have seven further rounds – including a return to Skegness on April 15 – and will conclude at Hednesford Hills Raceway on June 5.

The Angie Rowe Thunder 500, the traditional warm-up to the World Final, will happen on June 18, two weeks before the headline meeting.

Photos: Ben Lawrence, SMJ Photography, Jakob Ebrey, mkpics.net



National Hot Rod World Final will return to its traditional date in early July

### ENGLISH POINTS CHAMPIONSHIP

#### 2021-2022

ROUND	VENUE	WHEN
7	Ipswich	March 5
8	Hednesford	March 20
9	Skegness	April 15
10	Ipswich	April 18
11	Ipswich	April 30
12	Hednesford	May 2
13	Aldershot	May 22
14	Hednesford	June 5

### MAJOR EVENTS

#### 2022

EVENT	DATE
European Championships Lochgelly	April 2
Scottish Open Lochgelly	April 3
Angie Rowe Thunder 500 Ipswich	June 18
Spedweekend World Final Ipswich	July 2-3
British Championship Aghdowey	Sept 17-18

### ENGLISH POINTS STANDINGS

#### 2021-2022 National Hot Rods (after 6/14 rounds)

P	DRIVER	CAR	PTS
1	Billy Wood	Vauxhall Tigra	230
2	Carl Waller-Barrett	Vauxhall Tigra	228
3	Perry Cooke	Vauxhall Tigra	213
4	Paul Wright	Vauxhall Tigra	207
5	Aaron Dew	Ginetta G40	198
6	Jason Kew	Ginetta G40	189



Hollamby was enamoured by the MN Circuit Rally contest

## HOLLAMBY KEEN ON MORE RALLY OUTINGS

British Touring Car Championship stalwart Shaun Hollamby says he is keen to take on as many rally outings as he can in 2022 after a class-winning outing in the recent Brands Hatch Stages, part of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship.

The AmDTuning.com team boss had his first loose-surface outing for almost a decade in Kent when

he drove a Paul Sheard-prepared Mazda MX-5 and he took a 34-second win in the division for the Japanese sportscars on his way to 49th overall.

Hollamby, who is part of the team supporting MB Motorsport BMW 330e M Sport driver Jake Hill in this year's BTCC, said he entered the event on a whim.

"Someone pointed out to me that

the Brands Hatch Stages was on and I had a free weekend thought 'why not?'" explained Hollamby. "It was such a blast – the MN Circuit Rally Championship is great and I loved the Mazda. I have a pretty busy year lined up with my commitments in the BTCC but I will go away and check my calendar to see which other rally events I can fit in."

## GARDENER GETS HIS ENTRY IN EARLY FOR WELSH ATTACK

The Motorsport UK Welsh Rally Championship is set for a bumper season as early registrations are now being taken.

After two Covid-impacted years, the popular championship is set to run over a full 2022 season taking in the best gravel rallies in Wales. Registrations

opened at the weekend and co-ordinator Dave Evison reported a brisk response.

Covering all classes of rally car, including historic, the season features eight rallies starting with Rally North Wales, which is due to run for the first time since the 2019

event, on Saturday March 26.

The championship then takes in the Rallynuts Stages (April 9), Plains Rally (May 21), Red Kite (June 12), Nicky Grist (July 9), Woodpecker Stages (September 3), Wydean Stages (October 15) and Cambrian Rally (October 29).

The first registration to land was for Ludlow youngsters Perry Gardener and Jack Bowen. Gardener, son of former frontrunner Shaun, showed strong pace in a couple of late-season outings last year in a Ford Fiesta R5 and should be a key contender this year.



Gardener and Bowen were quick to sign up for 2022



Elliot Payne will be a leading light on the Riponian event

## RETURNING RIPONIAN IS SET FOR RECORD-BREAKING LINE-UP

The first UK gravel rally of 2022, the Riponian Stages on Sunday February 6, has drawn a record entry of 125 cars.

In the first barometer of the health of forest rallying for the new season, the Yorkshire rally has set the bar high and

will feature a capacity 120-car field for six special stages in the local forests.

The inclusion of the rally as the opening round of the British Historic Rally Championship has given the event a major boost and taken the field from a

typical count of around 80 cars to a capacity entry. The modern field is also strong and includes at least a dozen R5 cars.

Topping the entry will be local stars including young Elliot Payne and Stephen Petch in Ford Fiestas and Ollie Mellors in the

Proton Iriz R5. Former single-seater racer David Henderson is also a contender in his Fiesta R5.

This will be the first running of the Riponian since 2019. The 2020 event was axed on the eve of the rally due to gales and the 2021 event was a Covid casualty.



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Landmark result for Merc's star as he denies Norris a maiden win

## LEWIS HAILS A MAGICAL MOMENT AS HE HITS A CENTURY



Hamilton left it late to pounce for his 100th win



Lewis has achieved his big target

By Matt James

Lewis Hamilton has hailed his rivals after landing his 100th grand prix win in Russia on Sunday, snatching the victory from fellow Brit Lando Norris.

From pole position, McLaren man Norris seemed set to take his maiden victory until a late rain shower left him slithering off the circuit. Hamilton had been called in by his Mercedes team and swapped tyres. He was able to hunt down Norris and take the race win in the dying moments.

Hamilton, who finished one place ahead of his title rival Max Verstappen, says the 100-win benchmark is something he finds hard to believe. The seven-time champion said: "It's a magical moment. I could only ever have dreamed of still being here and having this opportunity to win these races and get to drive against such phenomenal talent this late in my career and to continue to building with Mercedes. I'm so proud of everything we've done, not only on track but also off."

Full report: p4  
Special feature:  
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# HISTORICS

## DOWN THE WORKSHOP

### 1971 VAUXHALL MAGNUM

Current owner: Brian Watts



Brands outing was thwarted

#### It has a good history

The 1971 Vauxhall Magnum, TJE 535K, now restored for rallying by Brian Watts, started life as a Production Saloon race car with Gerry Marshall before being successfully rallied in 1975 and '76 by Will Sparrow, with a best result of sixth overall on the Circuit of Ireland. Watts competed on the recent Brands Hatch Winter Stages but retired late in the day with electrical issues.

#### Watts bought it from Northern Ireland

Watts says: "I've had it for two years and got it just before Covid. It was sold as a running car and had been in Ireland for a long time. It was rallied over there and then put away in a collection. We make rollcages and got to know Kevin Jones, who rallies the Ferrari 308GTB. So, we bought a Sunbeam Lotus and got into rallying."

#### He wanted a car with history

"We wanted to get into bigger events using a car with history and we wanted something rear-wheel drive. So, we bought the Magnum and spent some time and money on it. We wanted something different, and this appealed. As far as I know, it's still on the original engine block."

#### It started out as a race car

"When it came out of the factory it went to Dealer Team Vauxhall and it seems that Gerry Marshall raced it in an orange livery. It was then converted to a rally car and Marshall was going to use it for the 1973 Tour of Britain until the team decided otherwise after Gerry broke his ribs after rolling it on a warm-up rally. In 1975 and '76 Will Sparrow did the major UK rallies with some good results. Pentti Airikkala even tried it out once before the Chevette project took over."

#### Watts took it to Italy

"Once we had restored it, we did the Modena Cento Ore in Italy in 2020 and really enjoyed it. We're planning to go back and do the event again this October. We did the Rally Revival last October and then took it to the Brands Hatch Stages earlier this month. We had a good run until the alternator played up on the first of the two stages in the dark. We certainly plan to use it on more asphalt events."



Miniature marvels: Imps and Minis are welcome

Photos: Paul Lawrence

## NEW SERIES TO RECREATE CLASSIC 1970s AND 1960s TIN-TOP GRIDS

### Special Saloons and Modified Sports to form new HSCC line-up for 2022

By Paul Lawrence

**The Historic Sports Car Club has launched a new race series for Modified Sports and Special Saloons of the late 1960s and 1970s.**

Historic Modsports and Saloons will recreate a period of national racing history from 50 years ago and more. The spaceframe cars that later came to dominate Special Saloons will not be allowed and cars must have original material bodies and the same manufacturer's engine that would have been in the period production road car. The regulations allow period-style changes to the engine,

transmission, bodywork, brakes and suspension.

The club's plan is to attract back into racing the type of cars that packed out Modified Sports and Special Saloon grids in period. Historic Modsports and Saloons will start with a double-header at Cadwell Park (June 4-5), followed by a single race at Oulton Park (August 6).

Prime mover Steve Watton said: "This is a tremendous initiative recognising the special place in history that these cars represent, and it neatly compliments the club's existing portfolio of categories."

"There are many suitable period cars sitting in garages



Modsports will be welcomed into the new series

with no purely historic series to race in. Our ambition is a grid full of Minis, MG Midgets, Ford Anglias, Datsun 240Zs, Ford Escorts, Hillman Imps and low-volume sportscars like Ginetta G15s and Clan Crusaders, all with permitted period modifications."

Andy Dee-Crowne of the HSCC said: "Historic Modsports and Saloons will recreate an important part of our national racing history. We want to gauge competitor support this year and then launch a fuller programme of races in 2023."

## PRITCHARD'S VIKING ESCORT OFFERED FOR SALE



Three-time title-winning car is looking for a new home

The most successful Ford Escort Mk2 in British historic rallying is up for sale.

Jason Pritchard has confirmed that he has likely done his last rally in the BDG-powered Mk2 that took him to a record-breaking hat-trick of BHRC titles in 2016, '17 and '18. The left-hand-drive car, originally built by Viking Motorsport, has been little used over the last two seasons and Pritchard says it does not

feature in his yet-to-be-announced plans for 2022.

"It is a car with a lot of good memories and results," said the Builth Wells driver. "There's no point in it collecting dust so I've decided to sell it."

Pritchard and regular co-driver Phil Clarke contested November's Roger Albert Clark Rally in a fresh-build Escort Mk2 from Scott Williams but crashed out when leading on the penultimate day.

## McRAE'S FOCUS TO GO UNDER THE HAMMER

**The ex-Colin McRae Ford Focus WRC registered Y4 FMC will be offered for sale at auction in early March.**

The 2001 Focus was built in time for McRae and Nicky Grist to give it a debut win on the Acropolis Rally in June. It then finished second in New Zealand before McRae famously rolled heavily out of Rally GB on the Rhonda stage, costing him a chance of a second World Rally Championship crown.

It was then rebuilt by M-Sport and rallied



McRae Focus: real history

extensively from 2006 to 2001 by Paul Benn and Hugh Hunter. It was returned in 2011 and restored to McRae specification.

It will go under the hammer with Silverstone Auctions on March 5.

## LEGENDS MEETING FOR HISTORICS AT SNETTERTON

The Snetterton circuit in July will have a prominent historic racing festival for the first time.

The Motor Racing Legends race meeting on the Norfolk venue's 200 circuit on July 16-17 will be titled the Snetterton Historic 200 and will celebrate nearly 70 years of racing at the former RAF airfield. The circuit was first used as a sprint venue in October 1951 and the first racing was held in 1953.

MRL will take some of its flagship race series including the Amon Cup for



Historic men will tackle Snett

Ford GT40s, the three-hour Royal Automobile Club Pall Mall Cup and the Historic Touring Car Challenge.

MRL boss Duncan Wiltshire said: "Snetterton is long overdue its own top-level historic meeting."

## IN BRIEF

#### Clarke's hot foot

Leading historic rally co-driver Phil Clarke recently completed one of the toughest fell running challenges when he contested the Spine Race, a 268-mile marathon along the Pennine Way against the clock. Clarke, best known for three BHRC titles alongside Jason Pritchard, is a retired firefighter from Shropshire and had several fellow competitors meet him en route to offer encouragement.

#### Rally Bath is go

The next edition of the Lombard Rally Bath revival has been announced for the weekend of November 4-5. The special stage demonstration and tour event has run previously run in mid-October but has moved into early November to avoid a date clash with the Telford-based Historic Rally Festival on October 15-16.

#### HRDC for Snetterton

The Historic Racing Drivers Club will support the new Snetterton Historic 200 (July 16-17) with three races to run alongside the Motor Racing Legends races. The Classic Alfa Challenge and All Stars grids will be joined by a race for the Jack Sears Trophy for pre-'66 touring cars, which celebrates the career of one of the region's most respected racing drivers.

#### New Stokes award

The Welsh National Rally Championship will include a new end-of-year award for historic crews in memory of the late David Stokes. The David Stokes Historic Challenge will be awarded driver who has most impressed a judging panel based on criteria including sportsmanship, unflappable determination, performance improvement and the way in which they promote motorsport in a positive and safe manner.

#### Classics on test

The Classic Sports Car Club is hosting two trackdays at Donington Park in February. On Tuesday February 15 there will be an unsilenced day which will act as a pre-season test day for competitors, while on Wednesday February 16 will be a trackday with a 98db noise limit. Both days are open to non-CSCC members.

#### Dates for Juniors

The Formula Junior Historic Racing Association has launched its 2022 calendars. The UK championship will take in 14 races at eight events, starting at Brands Hatch in April and including Classic Silverstone and the Spa Six-Hour event. The Lurani Trophy has five European rounds, starting at Hockenheim in May.

#### Pearson certified

Teenage Historic Formula Ford racer Tom Pearson can now drive on the road after passing his test last week. Tom, son of racer Ted, had his first race at the age of 16 in August 2020 in dad's Merlyn MK11/17 and tackled selected races last season.



Pearson knows highway code...



WRC REPORT: MONTE CARLO RALLY

THE MONTE CARLO OF CHAMPIONS

The WRC's new era began with an awe-inspiring battle between its greatest drivers, reports Nick Garton



Eighth Monte win; 80th career victory for Loeb



Greensmith took first stage win

RESULTS			
World Rally Championship round 1/13			
Event: Monte Carlo Rally Where: Monaco When: January 20-23			
POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Sebastien Loeb/Isabelle Galmiche	Ford Puma Rally1	3h00m32.8s
2	Sebastien Ogier/Benjamin Veillas	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+10.5s
3	Craig Breen/Paul Nagle	Ford Puma Rally1	+1m 39.8s
4	Kalle Rovanpera/Jonne Halttunen	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+2m16.2s
5	Gus Greensmith/Jonas Andersson	Ford Puma Rally1	+6m33.4s
6	Thierry Neuville/Martijn Wydaeghe	Hyundai i20 N Rally1	+7m42.6s
7	Andreas Mikkelsen/Torstein Eriksen	Skoda Fabia Rally2	+11m33.8s
8	Takamoto Katsuta/Aaron Johnston	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	+12m24.7s
9	Erik Cais/Petr Tesinsky	Ford Fiesta Rally2	+12m29.2s
10	Nikolay Gryazin/Konstantin Aleksandrov	Skoda Fabia Rally2	+13m41.3s

WRC2: Mikkelsen/Eriksen; WRC3: Sami Pajari/Enni Mäkelä (Ford Fiesta Rally3); RGT: Raphael Astier/Fred Vauclaire (Alpine A110) Championship positions: 1 Loeb 27; 2 Ogier 19; 3 Rovanpera 17; 4 Breen 15; 5 Neuville 11; 6 Greensmith 10; 7 Mikkelsen 6; 8 Katsuta 4; 9 Evans 4; 10 Cais 2, etc



Ogier was in sublime form but a puncture denied ninth Monte crown

How fitting it was that the 90th Monte Carlo Rally began on January 20. Just like Sergeant Pepper, it was 20 years ago to the day that Sebastien Loeb taught the WRC to play by crossing the line as winner – on the road at least – of the 70th Monte Carlo Rally.

For the 90th anniversary event, the old master returned with a chance to shake up the order once more. The hair may be greyer and spectacles may be required at the wheel these days, but for the WRC it was very much a case of *plus ça change, plus c'est le meme chose*.

**Day 1 – Thursday**

With their spotlights blazing, the Monte contenders began with the 10-mile blast through Luceram where that other great Sebastien, reigning World champion Ogier, set a benchmark of 10 minutes 34.0 seconds that he felt could have been better. Yet as the field came through in his wake only Ogier's Toyota team-mate Elfyn

Evans got within sight of that time, and even that was fully 9.3s in arrears.

The M-Sport Pumas of Gus Greensmith, Craig Breen and Adrien Fourmaux came next fastest, then three unhappy Hyundai drivers followed, with Thierry Neuville heading Oliver Solberg and Ott Tanak, all weathering the worst gremlins that their new Rally1 cars could throw at them (see feature, p16). Slowest of the Rally1 cars were the Toyotas of Takamoto Katsuta and an out-of-sorts Kalle Rovanpera.

Last to run was Loeb, who slotted into second between Ogier and Evans, 5.4s off the pace of his old nemesis. Game on.

A nighttime run out over Col de Turini closed the first day, with Ogier again fastest from Loeb and Evans. Just 1.9s between the trio as the fans went barmy. As the pack fell away in their wake, Breen dropped a couple of places as he struggled for confidence and Rovanpera lost 42.8 seconds but said that there was no obvious problem.

**Day 2 – Friday**

Heavy frost and ice gave Loeb the ideal starting position, and he duly notched up

a clean sweep of three stage wins on the morning loop. The M-Sport squad meanwhile endured drama on the day's opening test when Fourmaux, setting a pace equal to that of the two Sebastiens, ran wide on a left hander, ploughing into the mountainside on the right, which catapulted him 75 feet down a crevasse.

The crew were unharmed, but their Puma was in pieces and the team was livid at losing one of its three nominated manufacturer points-scoring entries.

Ogier, first on the road, caught the worst conditions, while the Hyundai crews sought to fix their wayward machinery. A new differential and gearbox plus some tweaks to the hybrid map allowed Neuville to begin setting comparable times to the likes of Breen and Evans but Tanak was frustrated by issues with almost every part of his powertrain through the day.

Loeb took another stage win after the break, then on SS7 Greensmith claimed his first career stage win, his euphoric response doubtless providing one of the highlights of this season. Loeb's pace was slowing as his hybrid assistance

packed up, which in turn allowed Ogier to claim the final stage of the day as he looked forward to a favourable road position on Saturday.

**Day 3 – Saturday**

Three stages formed the Saturday morning loop, two of which would be repeated in the afternoon including the mythical Sisteron. There was clearly going to be drama here, as while the rest of the rally was bone dry, the gravel crews found that Sisteron was 77% dry, 16% slushy snow, 4% packed snow and 3% black ice.

Evans won the first stage of the morning, heading a resurgent Rovanpera and Ogier ahead of Neuville and Breen. Loeb cooked his supersoft Pirellis on both opening tests, which ended with Ogier level with Loeb on time but ahead on the leaderboard by virtue of his SS1 win - all this despite feeling that his Toyota's hybrid map was below par.

While Loeb jostled with the Toyotas, the Hyundais were in all sorts of bother. Neuville declared that his car's handling was as bad as it was on Friday morning,

Tanak dropped a minute with a puncture and Solberg crashed on SS10, blaming the noxious smoke that filled his cockpit, eventually restarting with most of the front panels missing from his i20.

And so to Sisteron. Tanak flew up the stage wearing a mix of soft/supersoft slicks but, as the road worsened, he narrowly avoided skating into a ravine, instead crashing head-first into the mountain. The resulting engine damage ended his rally, while Neuville had no faith in his car, losing half a minute. The biggest drama then came as Evans slid off backwards, car intact but hanging precipitously off the hillside.

The Welshman's anguish was understandable, having been a minute clear of anyone else who might get a sniff of this year's World championship title. The stage was red flagged after the two Sebastiens had cleared, Ogier leading Loeb to the tyre service by 5.4s.

The reason for Neuville's handling issues became apparent after the break, when the field returned to the 10-mile Saint Jeannet stage: the Belgian's right front suspension assembly burst



Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Fresh air was in short supply for Oliver Solberg, who was overcome by fumes and eventually parked up



Neuville was the only Hyundai finisher, giving his all at the wheel and as a mechanic to nurse the car home

through the bonnet of his i20. Roanperera meanwhile took his first stage win of the season, while Loeb clawed back 0.4s from Ogier. On their return to Sisteron, some classic WRC gamesmanship had Roanperera set a scorching benchmark on snow tyres, prompting Loeb to bolt on soft slick rubber. Ogier saw this and, against his better judgement, followed suit. His time was 21.1s slower than his young Finnish team-mate, but 16.1s faster than Loeb's, handing himself a



It was an unhappy Monte for Tanak

healthy advantage for the final day. On the cusp of extending his all-time Monte win record to nine, Ogier was magnanimous. "I was guessing he will try something... we thought that it would not be the best choice but still I wanted to have a straight fight, you know, and don't have any different choice... may the best guy win – or survive!" Loeb once told this writer that the best tactic Marcus Gronholm ever used on him in their titanic battles of yore was to admit defeat before the final evening, then come out all guns blazing on the final morning. After Sisteron he shrugged: "Now it's a bit far. We tried, but Ogier saw it..."

**Day 4 – Sunday** Sure enough, Loeb opened the final morning's two-stage loop with a win, but only reclaimed 1.1 seconds from Ogier while Solberg finally parked his fume-filled i20. Neuville then salvaged some pride for Hyundai by claiming the team's first stage win on the next stage. The fizz seemed to have gone out of Monte Carlo on the second pass, but then Ogier's Toyota began to lurch on SS16: a

left-front puncture was the cause, costing 34s to hand Loeb a 9.5s lead going into the final stage. "With Pirelli, when you have no trust, that can happen always," said a grim-faced World champion. Adding insult to injury, Ogier then picked up a 10s penalty for jumping the Powerstage's start. Breen's quiet rally ended on the podium, while Roanperera snatched the top Powerstage bonus. But points are for another day: this was history. Maths teacher Isabelle Galmiche had already surprised her pupils last week with the revelation that she was a rally co-driver. She returns to the classroom as the first woman to win in the WRC since Fabrizia Pons in 1997, adding another landmark to an already historic result. "We went through the most difficult period in my business life... with the whole Covid situation," said an emotional M-Sport founder, Malcolm Wilson, as his team celebrated. "Unfortunately, we had to make about 100 people redundant so the commitment and everything that has been put in by all this team... it's these people here who deserve this."

## MIKKELSEN HOLDS OUT TO CLAIM WRC2 HONOURS

As the only class that remained ostensibly unaltered from 2021, in terms of the cars and crews at least, WRC2 was at its frenetic best throughout the weekend. First blood fell to local hero Eric Camilli's Citroen C3 in his first appearance in the category since winning in Spain last season. The Frenchman built a nine-second cushion on Thursday night but then came to grief early on Friday, damaging his front suspension. Defending class champion Andreas Mikkelsen then picked up the baton of leadership in his Toksport Skoda, but was soon overtaken by an inspired Stephane Lefebvre in another Citroen. The Frenchman looked to be in imperious form, but was one of several WRC2 drivers to receive a 30-minute penalty on Saturday after their gravel crews loitered at the flying finish while the Rally1 cars shot past. Lefebvre then crashed out, leaving Mikkelsen in front of team-mate Marco Bulacia... but yet another

talented Citroen-mounted Frenchman in the form of Yohan Rossel was on a charge. Rossel threatened but then slid off into a ditch and was later slowed by a puncture to end his challenge. Bulacia went out with mechanical problems on SS13, promoting Czech driver Eric Cais to second in his lone M-Sport Fiesta while Hyundai junior programme refugee Nikolay Gryazin was third in yet another Fabia. Further back, the hopes that Englishman Chris Ingram held of enjoying his longed-for Monte debut were dealt a blow when his car got stuck in third gear on the opening night. His first Monte turned into a slog thereafter but two Powerstage points showed his potential, elevating him to seventh in the class standings overall. From here onwards, Ingram can call upon more knowledge of the events and will be a contender. "So happy, can't be better, the best start to the championship possible," said a cheerful winner Mikkelsen. "Very happy for the whole team."



Mikkelsen opened WRC2 title defence with hard-fought win

## PAJARI PREVAILS IN WRC3

Reigning Junior WRC champion Sami Pajari emerged from Monte Carlo as the first winner of the new-look WRC3 category. Only four crews arrived in the principality with their new-for-2022 four-wheel-drive M-Sport Fiesta Rally3 machines, but the talented young Finn did not go unchallenged. Czech driver Jan Cerny set the pace on Thursday night's openers and maintained his form into Friday, although Pajari was already making inroads. The only other entrants, Enrique Brazzoli and Zoltan Laszlo, were already more than 11 minutes in arrears after the first full day came to a close.

On Saturday, Pajari ground down the Czech leader's advantage and swept by at the start of the afternoon loop, straight into a 15.4-second lead. Laszlo meanwhile became the only class retiree at the end of the penultimate day, after hitting mechanical difficulties on the final stage. Gradually Pajari increased his lead through Sunday's tests to 34.5s by the penultimate stage. Cerny had wisely kept his powder dry, however, and unleashed a sizzling Powerstage to maximise the number of points that he takes forward: six points measuring the Finn's advantage in the standings.



Pajari won a two-horse race for new-look WRC3 honours



## FEATURE

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

## BRAVE NEW WORLD

*The World Rally Championship has pinned its hopes upon Rally1 to remain relevant. Nick Garton assesses an historic debut*



Stage fright: teams had their hands full in Monte

**A** new era of rallying has begun. Make no mistake, it has been a Herculean job on the part of M-Sport, Toyota and Hyundai to create an entirely new category of cars in the midst of a pandemic. So, what did Monte Carlo teach us?

There was drama, hard words were said and opinions were divided but it's important to remember that outright negativity about the new cars is as pointless as Donald Trump's insistence that the US elections were rigged. The WRC is where it is, and it will be the same for three years at the very least.

Undoubtedly the biggest public critic of Rally1 has been Hyundai ace Thierry Neuville, who declared that the final specification of the cars, when it was announced in early 2020, was "shit" and that it was a formula "designed only to keep M-Sport in the WRC".

Neuville was still grumbling late last season, but on the eve of Monte Carlo he toed the line, saying: "There's a lot of things going on, not only in the stages, but also between the stages, to make sure that the car is ready... there might be some

tactics as well... some strategies to take the most out of it... which is exciting."

The first fruits of all this labour and debate came on Thursday morning in Monaco. All 11 of the Rally1 entries made their first roll-out towards shakedown. Not all of them managed this feat at precisely their allotted time, however.

Ott Tänak's Hyundai was the first to induce sweaty palms when he failed to materialise at the start of the shakedown stage. He got there in the end, but when he did so it was without hybrid assistance. The Estonian pressed on regardless and was rewarded with the fifth-fastest time on the stage, despite effectively carrying 80kg of ballast that served no purpose for propulsion.

Next to falter was Gus Greensmith, who was whooping with delight after the first of his three runs but then the power steering on his M-Sport Ford Puma gave out. True, this wasn't a hybrid issue per se, but it still meant that his engineers had to work feverishly solve the issue and keep it solved for the next three days.

The Toyota Yaris of Takamoto Katsuta left its service bay on schedule but rolled back in almost immediately, remaining there long enough to miss two of his three allotted start times on the shakedown.

In a double dose of pre-event nerves for the team, Kalle Rovanperä's sister car decided that two shakedown stages were sufficient and coasted to a halt just a quarter of a mile into its final run.

In Casino Square for the ceremonial start, nerves were clearly in the forefront. The idea was for cars to run silently over the start ramp under electric power, but the enthusiastic Monegasque MC decided to interview local hero Sebastien Ogier for so long that he feared for the battery. His Yaris eventually moved off to the thrum of internal combustion. An FIA inquest was called but Ogier was cleared of any fault.

Later on, during a frenetic Saturday afternoon, it was the turn of Neuville to almost fall foul of the "emissions-free" running requirement. He left the tyre service under petrol power and got away with an official telling-off.

Each stage start soon garnered as much interest as the timing screens, where Evans was spotted wafting heat out of his Toyota with his door, looking like someone stuck in traffic on a sweaty August bank holiday. When Neuville lined up, meanwhile, his Hyundai was venting smoke through a pre-designed channel, looking oddly like the sort of dry ice machine found at a 1980s disco.

The smoke was particularly troubling to Oliver Solberg in the third Hyundai, who eventually withdrew. "Can you see all the smoke in the car? I'm crying... and I can't breathe before the stage," he said on SS4. "I lost full concentration in the beginning. I couldn't focus, I was dizzy."

Tänak was equally unhappy with his i20, having endured engine issues on the first stage, hydraulic problems on the second and hybrid dramas on several stages thereafter. The hydraulic question mark over the Hyundai squad was further fuelled by Neuville's i20 leaving a small lake of gearbox oil at the end of SS2, although a bigger cause for concern was his right front damper poking through the bonnet on Saturday afternoon.

Over at Toyota, Rovanperä struggled without the centre differential and aero add-ons that his previous Yaris WRC was permitted. Rally1's propensity for understeer was clearly causing him drama. This, combined with the added thrust of the hybrid kicking in, meant that Rovanperä began with the air of a man clinging on to the wheel, but after three days of work he was back in stage-winning form once again.

"How do I use the hybrid?" he responded to one enquiry. "I don't

know, I just drive..."

The question of boost mapping also raised its head over at Hyundai, where both Solberg and Neuville spun under acceleration from low-speed corners. "I have never been so scared while driving," Neuville concluded.

In comparison with the works teams, M-Sport's awning was an oasis of calm where the main concern was tyre management. With bone-dry conditions only allowing all teams the use of soft or supersoft Pirellis, it became clear that the extra heft of Rally1 cars was the biggest factor for the Fords.

This is where the presence of Loeb came in handy, guiding the team with guru-like confidence. Even he admitted to overdoing it on the opening climb to Col de Turini, but calmly backed off to rejuvenate the rubber before a mind-blowingly rapid descent. The Pumas also appeared hungrier for battery power than their rivals, but the way that they delivered the extra 134bhp looked seamless. Indeed, when Loeb lost his hybrid on SS7, he only dropped three seconds.

The downside for M-Sport was Adrien Fourmaux's mighty shunt on SS3, rolling 70 feet down a precipice. On the positive side, however, it displayed the virtues of the FIA's new survival cell and crushable spaceframe to full effect.

You could hardly call it a close finish, with a gulf of minutes between the survivors on Sunday (Loeb and Ogier aside). But we should celebrate those engineers who tackled every glitch and complaint that was thrown at them with total commitment. They were the real stars who kept this new WRC era rolling through the 90th Monte Carlo Rally. They conjured an engrossing baptism for Rally1 – write it off at your peril. ■

**"I've never been so scared while driving"**

Thierry Neuville



Safety gloves are a must in Rally1



FEATURE

MOTORSPORT NEWS POLL:  
BRITAIN'S MOST MISSED MOTOR RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

We are on the hunt to discover the series that you miss the most, so help us out by registering your vote

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Mike Dixon, Motorsport Images

It's wintertime, and Motorsport News has been in reflective mood as we look ahead to the new national racing season. We put our thinking caps on to come up with a list of the circuit racing categories that we miss the most from the UK tracks.

From single-seaters, sportscars and saloons, there have been a raft of initiatives that have thrilled us trackside and shaped generations but have sadly fallen by the wayside for a number of different reasons.

We are after your help to establish which category is the most missed and we have drawn up a shortlist. Let us know your favourites by voting online.

MN editor Matt James said: "So many great circuit racing championships have come and gone in the years gone by, so narrowing it down to just 10 was a real headache. However, we have selected a broad

HOW TO VOTE

- Visit [fastcar.co.uk](http://fastcar.co.uk)
- Click on 'Motorsport News'
- Pick your winner and vote

range and there are some real belters in our list. We'd love to know your opinions and it's simple: just follow the instructions above and vote for your favourite and we will unearth our most missed championship."

We will run the result in next week's Motorsport News, out on February 3.

THE CONTENDERS



1 TVR Tuscan Challenge

Blackpool truly rocked in the 1990s. The TVR Tuscan Challenge featured awesome lightweight rear-wheel-drive sportscars, a plethora of national racing's biggest names and a sweet V8 soundtrack. The action was fearsome.

2 Formula 5000

The American single-seater import was loud, brash and spectacular when it landed in the UK in 1969. The five-litre Chevvy monster single-seaters lit up the UK tracks in some pretty decent hands before it morphed into Group 8 in 1976.



3 Thundersports

Britain's version of InterSerie racing with an eclectic mix of sportscars, ranging from the big-banger V8 CanAm machines through to the press-on clubmen in its second tier two-litre division. In the 1980s, the rumbling racers provided some real fireworks.



4 Super Saloons (and Thundersaloons)

Into the 1970s, Special Saloons evolved into Super Saloons as Gerry Marshall took on the world in 'Baby Bertha'. The spaceframe specials got more and more clever and eventually it self-destructed before Thundersaloons had a golden period.



5 Production Saloons

The heady days in the 1980s sustained two front-line Production Saloon classes, one from the British Racing and Sports Car Club and one from the British Automobile Racing Club. After a revival as the National Saloon Car Championship on the PowerTour package at the turn of the century, the series was absorbed into the BTCC before disappearing.



6 Ford Escort Mexicos

The first of the manufacturer-backed one-make race series followed Ford's victory on the 1970 London-Mexico World Cup Rally. Identical Kent-engined Mk1 Escorts with a host of hot-shot drivers delivered frantic action.

7 Formula Vauxhall Junior

The baby brother of Formula Vauxhall Lotus arrived in 1991 and the 1600cc slick-shod single-seaters were an immediate hit. Dario Franchitti was one of the early pacesetters and dozens of future champions came through the category before it was shelved in 2000.



8 Formula Renault

Imported from France in 1989, the multi-chassis early days of Formula Renault provided huge support from the French firm, a marketplace for teams and constructors and a competitive playing field. The category went one-make in the late 1990s before disappearing from the UK in 2011.



9 Eurocar V6

Sonny Howard's vision in 1994 brought about the spec Ford Mondeo-based V6 spaceframed racer, with the aim of attracting short oval drivers to the long circuits alongside the established racers, and it worked. A V8 version later in the 1990s was a stepping-stone but wasn't as popular.



10 Renault UK Clio Cup

Morphing from the Renault 5TS championship, the Renault Clio Cup really took off as part of the British Touring Car Championship support bill in 1993. The series went through several iterations of the French hatchback and always provided wheel-to-wheel action and some worthy champions.



FEATURE

THE BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP'S GREATEST ONE-HIT WONDERS

Matt James picks out some special one-time round winners in the BTCC

**D**an Rowbottom probably didn't realise it at the time, but he became part of a club he won't want to be a member of when he won his first British Touring Car Championship race in his Team Dynamics Honda Civic at Oulton Park in August last year.

Although his career is a long way from finished and he has more silverware in his sights in 2022, Rowbottom became the 50th BTCC driver to register a single victory.

The list of one-time winners is a real glance into the history books. BMW tin-top legend Roberto Ravaglia is on there, as is F1 driver Jochen Mass. Dan Gurney appears, as does Tiff Needell and legend Tony Lanfranchi. Current-day driving standards chief James Cole appears on the list too.

Here, we have picked out some of our favourites.



Bailey restored some pride for Toyota in 1993

1 Julian Bailey

**When:** July 25, 1993  
**Where:** Knockhill  
**Car:** Toyota Carina E

Perhaps the most famous line in British Touring Car Championship commentary is from Murray Walker: "The car upside down is a Toyota..."

Those words were spoken in 1993 when Toyota team-mates Julian Bailey and Will Hoy contrived to collide at Silverstone's British Grand Prix support event in their Securicor-branded Carinas.

Two weeks later, once the dust had settled, the BTCC headed north to Knockhill. Bailey qualified on pole around the 1.2-mile track and led the first start of the first race before a stoppage. In part two, local man John Cleland jumped the Japanese car to prevail for Vauxhall.

Bailey struck early on in race two, from the front row, to overtake the Scotsman and went on to eke out a sizeable advantage for his one and only BTCC triumph.

To restore the pride for Toyota, Hoy overtook Patrick Watts' Mazda to seal third place.

Bailey went on to fifth in the points table. His weekend in Fife was the highlight of his year, though, with only one other podium.

2 Mike Jordan

**When:** April 23, 2006  
**Where:** Mondello Park  
**Car:** Honda Integra

The 2006 season marked Mike Jordan's return to the British Touring Car Championship. The Porsche and British GT title winner had dabbled with tin-tops in the early stages of his career in 1989 in a self-run Peugeot 309GTI with a four-race programme.

But when he returned some 17 years later, it was a vastly different assault. Through his Eurotech team, Jordan had bought an off-the-peg title-winning car as he got his hands on a Team Dynamics-built Honda Integra. The potent car was well-run and Jordan was a winner in his second meeting. He picked up a front-row start in the reversed-grid final race at Mondello Park and



Mike Jordan achieved his dream with a Mondello win

powered to a win ahead of Colin Turkington's MG and eventual champion Matt Neal in the Dynamics Integra.

Jordan went on to add another podium at Donington Park later in the season on his way to 10th in the standings. He scored four further podiums in 2007 to finish eighth. This was just the start of Eurotech's journey: in 2008, Jordan was joined in the team by his son Andrew in the BTCC's first father-and-son attack.

3 Steven Kane

**When:** April 4, 2010  
**Where:** Thruxton  
**Car:** BMW 320si

Acknowledged single-seater expert Steven Kane had experience in sportscars with some Porsche outings, but he was an unknown in tin-top circles until he secured a drive with Motorbase Performance to handle a rear-wheel-drive BMW in 2008.

That maiden season showed flashes of form with three podium spots on his way to 11th in the points, one place ahead of his experienced team-mate Rob Collard.

After a season as Formula 2 test driver in 2009, the Northern Irishman returned to Motorbase to handle its Airwaves-backed BMW in 2010.



Kane's start to 2010 season could not have been better

Motorbase hit the ground running at the opening round at Thruxton and a favourable race three reversed-grid draw put Kane on the front row. He jumped WSR BMW man Rob Collard to lead home his team-mate Mat Jackson in a superb performance from the Kent-based team.

It was Kane's final season in the BTCC, and he finished sixth in the standings at the end of the campaign.



Jerry Mahony tamed a mighty Sierra RS500

4 Jerry Mahony

**When:** March 27, 1988  
**Where:** Silverstone  
**Car:** Ford Sierra RS500

One of a number of production saloon battlers who had ripped up the circuits in the hugely popular national racing divisions, Jerry Mahony used the backing of picture framing firm Arquati to step up to the BTCC in 1988.

That was the season the BBC started to show 25-minute

highlights of every round and it was the first steps of the upward trend that the tin-top series would enjoy.

Armed with a Roger Dowson Engineering-tended RS500 and with the sponsor cash to pay for an onboard broadcast camera, Mahony became one of the stories of the season. It kicked off in fine style with a win at Silverstone when he inherited the lead after Andy Rouse had a turbo

boost pipe failure on his RS500.

Mahony went on to score four other podiums that season and another highlight was notching the fastest lap at Snetterton, although he finished outside the points in Norfolk due to brake problems.

The result were enough for him to place second in the Class A standings behind Rouse, and he was seventh overall in the championship overall.



Photos: Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey



Hero Pond hustles the Rover around Thruxton

## 5 Tony Pond

**When:** April 1, 1984  
**Where:** Silverstone  
**Car:** Rover Vitesse

The moustachioed hero with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth, Tony Pond was a rally man through and through and was a gun for hire. After an association with Opel, throwing its nippy Kadett around the lanes, Pond was co-opted onto British Leyland's books in the mid-1970s and is perhaps most associated with a very sideways Triumph TR7.

His links with the Midlands car firm remained strong into the 1980s, and the Austin Rover Group offered him the chance to battle in the lower classes of the British Saloon Car Championship with an MG Metro Turbo in Class B and he took fourth in the division with a victory at Donington on his way to sixth overall.

He was moved to the top table in a Team Sanyo Class A Rover Vitesse in 1984 in an Austin Rover-backed TWR-run machine as team-mate to Steve Soper. Four podiums and an outright win at Silverstone on April Fool's Day put him in the thick of the fight for the crown but Austin Rover, affronted at losing the 1983 BSCC title after a protracted legal battle, took its bat and ball and stormed off midway through the campaign.

## 6 Mike Smith

**When:** July 22, 1990  
**Where:** Brands Hatch  
**Car:** Ford Sierra RS500

Mike Smith was as much at home on a motor racing podium as he was on television in the 1980s. Winning the Willhire 24 Hours in 1986 alongside Lionel Abbott in a Ford Escort RS Turbo showed that Smith had the credentials to run at the front with the leading tin-top players of the day. After dabbling with the BTCC in the early stages of his career, his first full assault came with Prodrive as team-mate to Frank Sytner in 1988. While Sytner took the overall crown, Smith proved a thorn in his side on his ride to third in the class. After that relationship, Smith formed Trakstar with friend Robb Gravett and stepped



Gravett (l) and Smith claimed the one-hour enduro race

up to the top class. After a full season in 1989 – where Smith scored a podium and was seventh overall – the cash-strapped team slimmed down to one car in 1990 and Smith focused on broadcasting,

although he did take part in four rounds. One of those was when he shared with Gravett for the one-hour race at Brands Hatch. As Smith had been nominated as the 'endurance event' driver, he was ineligible for points.

## 7 Tim Sugden

**When:** June 30, 1991  
**Where:** Brands Hatch  
**Car:** BMW M3

Rising single-seater star Tim Sugden had been a race winner in Formula Ford 1600 and Formula Renault when BMW decided it wanted to try out some young UK talent in its top-flight touring car team. He was joined by Kelvin Burt and Kurt Luby and three second places in the five rounds he entered meant Sugden was the stand-out, finishing sixth in the Class B division. Sharing the seat again in 1991 while Steve Soper was on international duty, Sugden's sole win in the championship came at Brands Hatch in June. Starting from pole, the Bradford driver lost out to Will Hoy's BMW at the



Sugden (left) leads Hoy away from the line at Brands

green light and hounded the leader until lap 14, when he lunged for the inside into Surtees. After brief contact, Sugden was through and went on to his only BTCC win. Sugden went on to land a

factory drive with Team Toyota GB in 1994 and 1995 but the Carina model was not competitive and score a best finish of 14th in the standings in his second season with the Japanese marque.



Derek Warwick took his win at Knockhill in 1998

## 8 Derek Warwick

**When:** August 16, 1998  
**Where:** Knockhill  
**Car:** Vauxhall Vectra

The Formula 1 favourite and Le Mans winner was on the look-out for a fresh challenge when his top-flight career was winding down and found it with a switch to the British Touring Car Championship in

1995 with the Prodrive-run factory Alfa Romeo team. But gone was the Italian team's dominance of the previous season as all teams were now using wings and splitters. Alfa went from the front to penultimate place in the nine-strong manufacturers contest. Warwick himself couldn't better

eighth-placed finishes in his maiden tin-top campaign. But Warwick had liked what he had seen in the BTCC and set about pulling together the elements of Triple Eight Race Engineering, which would go on to become the series' benchmark team. He was on the driving strength

for the first two seasons with Vauxhall in 1997 and 1998 and his BTCC highlight came at Knockhill in that second year. Warwick and team-mate John Cleland placed ninth and eighth in the points respectively – Cleland with two wins to Warwick's one – as Vauxhall claimed fifth in the makes' race.

### ALL-TIME WINNERS

#### British Touring Car Championship

P	DRIVER	WINS	P	DRIVER	WINS
1	Jason Plato	97	9	Frank Gardner	35
2	Matt Neal	63	10	Mat Jackson	31
3	Andy Rouse	60	11	Gordon Spice	27
4	Colin Turkington	60	12	Andrew Jordan	26
5	Gordon Shedden	50	13	Fabrizio Giovanardi	24
6	Alain Menu	36	14	Ash Sutton	24
7	Yvan Muller	36	15	Brian Muir	22
8	James Thompson	36			



Jason Plato tops the charts with a strong 97 wins



## FEATURE

# PETER DUMBRECK: THE HIGHEST FLYING SCOTSMAN OF ALL

**Matt James** posed your questions to the DTM and sportscar stalwart



Peter Dumbreck in his Mercedes colours

**A**dding victory in the Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix to a domestic title should be enough to mark any racer out as a Formula 1 star of the future, but things simply failed to slot into place for Peter Dumbreck.

The single-seater dreams were largely paused after that double success in 1998 as he took up a dream offer to join Mercedes for an assault on Le Mans. The image of Dumbreck's sportscar somersaulting into the trees in 1999 is one of the most spectacular and memorable in motorsport history but it was a fleeting moment in the Fife man's career.

It is one he knows he was fortunate to escape from but far from being the end, it was the start of an alliance with the three-pointed star in the DTM and he went on to become a sportscar regular in Japan and around the globe.

More recently he has plied his trade at the Nurburgring 24 Hours in a range of Falken Tyres-backed machines. While he has now stepped away from that programme, the Scot has not retired from competition and is looking for new opportunities.

He kindly took time out of his schedule to tackle the Motorsport News readers' questions and is full and frank in his answers.

**Question:** What sparked your interest in motorsport? Who was your motorsport hero?

**James Hilton**  
Via email

**Peter Dumbreck:** "It started in karting when I was a kid. There was no motorsport background in my family. We were more of a horsey-type family. But I always used to watch Formula 1 and I was always interested in it.

"Because we weren't a motor racing family, I didn't really know how to go about taking part in it. I tried fun kart events when we were away on holiday in Spain and things like that.

"When I got back to Scotland, I heard of someone locally who was into karting and he was racing at our local track of Crail [in Fife]. We went and had a look and met some people. Dad was supportive and we got a kart, but I don't think either of us realised at the time or the money needed to do it... even back then. It is probably 10 times as expensive now.

"Money was an issue, so we raced in Scotland a lot but we did go south sometimes. Rowrah in Cumbria was one of the main ones for me because it was closer, but I raced at Kimbolton and Clay Pigeon too – Clay Pigeon [in Dorset] felt like the other side of the world...

"After karting, I did the Jim Russell Racing Drivers' School at Donington Park in 1993. I knew I was half-decent at karting, but I didn't know if that would translate to cars or if I would be any good at it. I didn't know if it was something I should pursue.



Photos: Motorsport Images



Dumbreck dominated Formula Vauxhall in 1996

“By then, I had seen Dario Franchitti, who is a similar age to me, go off and do car racing, and there was David Coulthard and Allan McNish too. They were all guys I was around in my karting days. “I wanted to see if there was a future in racing for me, but I hadn’t really thought of making a career out of it. Up until that stage, it had purely been something I did for fun.”

**MN:** What career path had you been headed down up to that point?

**PD:** “I didn’t do that well at school so I didn’t really know. I had gone to do a year of civil engineering at college but I didn’t enjoy that so I was back in the family mushroom-growing business, but I wasn’t enjoying that either. So I think my next logical step at that point was to become either a racing driver or a fireman.”

**MN:** And your motorsport heroes?

**PD:** “Hero-wise, I suppose watching Nigel Mansell in the Williams with his tyre blowing out in Adelaide [in 1986], all of those memories are quite strong with me. Whether the drivers then were heroes or not is difficult to say, but they were certainly an inspiration for me to go racing.”

**MN:** Your first racing steps were in Formula First. Why did you choose that over Formula Ford or Formula Vauxhall Junior?

**PD:** “It was purely down to money. Formula First was the cheapest option. I did the Winter Series in 1993 and it cost

something like £5000. It went well, and I finished second to Darren Turner. I won a couple of races and Darren won the others and it opened my eyes to what was possible.

“I had heard that Formula Ford or Formula Vauxhall Junior was the next step and Junior seemed to be a bit cheaper. With a bit of help from various people and with a little bit of family money – and my trust fund from my grandparents – we made that happen. I was rolling the dice to see what happened and I went on and won the championship.”

**MN sets the scene:** After a learning year in Formula Vauxhall in 1995, Peter Dumbreck got a shot with the crack Paul Stewart Racing outfit for the same category in 1996 – and he claimed the title. The team patron, Sir Jackie Stewart, had a habit of teaching his drivers how to race smoothly by sticking a ball in a bowl on the bonnet of a saloon and then driving around a track without the ball flying out. . .

**Question:** Did Sir Jackie Stewart give you the ‘bowl’ test?

**Gordon Henderson**  
**Via email**

**PD:** “He didn’t do that to me; I think he had evolved beyond that by the time I arrived. But I did drive around with Jackie in a Ford Escort Cosworth at Oulton Park and he had Jan Magnussen there, who was his grand prix driver at the time, and I think Jonny Kane was there

*continued on page 22*



Dumbreck landed a plum drive in Formula Vauxhall and F3 with the team run by Paul Stewart (right)



# FEATURE



The Tartan army: Dumbreck finished third in F3 for PSR

too. We all got in with him and he was just trying to explain how to be as smooth as possible and how to carry speed through the corner, all those kinds of things.”

**MN:** That is quite something, though. Here was a three-time F1 World champion passing on his driving tips to you. That most have been quite a moment. . .

**PD:** “Arguably without Jackie Stewart and his influence on my career, you wouldn’t be doing this interview with me now. I ran out of money midway through 1996 in Formula Vauxhall and there was massive funding help from Jackie – and that extended into Formula 3 in 1997 with PSR too. My career could very easily have paused or even stopped at that stage. “But Jackie kept faith with me, and he had the sponsorship. There was a bit of

give and take because he had a lot of Scottish sponsors and I was a Scottish driver. I went on and won the title for him in 1996 and I was third in F3 in 1997.”

**Question: Was the Stewart Grand Prix F1 team a carrot to driving with PSR in British F3 in 1997? Or did it distract the team?**

**Barry May**  
**Via email**  
**PD:** “F1 didn’t distract them, no. PSR was renowned for being the best team in Formula Vauxhall and British F3 at that time. So, to begin with, you are in a situation where you are in the best team and you feel good about it and you know you are going to have one of the best cars out there. “But, alongside that, you get every other up-and-coming young driver around also

trying to go to that team too so, in the end, [1998] I had to move out of PSR because I had no money.”

**Question: What prompted the switch to Japan for Formula 3 with the TOM’S Toyota team in 1998?**

**Lisa Jennings**  
**Via email**  
**PD:** “After dropping out of PSR, I had to go out to Japan in 1998 and take the best possibility for me out there. “I didn’t have a seat for Macau in 1997 and [race prime mover] Barry Bland helped me out. He found some funding for me and I was able to go to Siggie Muller’s GM Motorsport team for the event. “I remember after the last round of the British F3 championship at Thruxton in 1997 for PSR, I got in my car on the

Sunday night, got to the ferry and drove overnight to Germany to the GM Motorsport HQ and I was testing the very next day at Hockenheim. “Macau went really well for me and I was running in the top three when I had a driveshaft failure. Mark Webber and I were the two Macau rookies who were right up the sharp end. “As much as that was disappointing, it put me on TOM’S’ radar. Also, Siggie Muller had helped to place Michael Krumm with TOM’S [in 1994] so there was a connection and he introduced me to them. When I knew what was going on with PSR, I knew I didn’t have many options and, of all the options I had, the TOM’S one was the strongest. “It was a free drive in Japan and there were living expenses and a flat. I knew I would be in the best car – the one that had just won the championship – so I thought I would be silly not to take it.”

**MN:** It was a success, because you won the title at a canter. But it was a huge step to move to the other side of the world and be on your own in a different culture. Did it help focus the mind?

**PD:** “At that stage, there was a big hub of foreign drivers over there, people like Ralph Firman Jr, Tom Coronel and a few Argentinean racers, and we all hung about together. Darren Manning arrived later in the year too. “I remember when I moved into my flat in Gotemba, funded by TOM’S, in the cupboard there was Tom Kristensen’s old trainers and flags and all kinds of little bits and bobs of his that they obviously hadn’t cleared out from when

he had been there a few years before.”

**Question: How important was winning the 1998 Macau F3 Grand Prix – did that open doors? Six of the drivers you beat there went on to F1...**

**Emma Facey**  
**Via email**  
**PD:** “When I was going there in 1998, I felt like I had proved myself in Japan. And I had a Mercedes deal was in my back pocket by then. . . “You get these moments in life where you will always remember where you were. For me it was before Macau in 1998. After I had won the Japanese F3 title, I was driving through Tokyo and the phone rang. It was [Mercedes motorsport boss] Norbert Haug’s secretary saying that Norbert wanted to speak to me. “Norbert offered me a drive at Le Mans for 1999. I said thanks very much, and yes. I remember the first time I flew into Germany and went to [prep firm] HWA to sit in the car. This was a magic new adventure for me. “So by the time Macau came about, I was on an up. I was mega confident and I had nothing to lose because I was already sorted for 1999. I was very relaxed and I think that is the way to approach that race. Macau chooses you to win it, not the other way around. Plenty of folk have gone there – super-quick guys – and they have never won it for whatever reason. Even guys like Lewis Hamilton. . . “Everything went my way that weekend and I gradually increased my pace over the weekend. I think my number one thing was to beat the PSR drivers – that was a

**“Sir Jackie Stewart kept my motorsport career alive”**

**Peter Dumbreck**



The ill-fated Le Mans attempt with Mercedes CLR came in 1999





The greatest day: Winning the Macau Grand Prix in 1998

big factor for me because that was the team I had been moved out of and I wanted to show them that maybe they had made a mistake there.”

**Question:** *How close did you get to driving an Formula 1 car? Was there ever a deal on the table?*

**Gary Jennings**  
**Via email**

**PD:** “I never really got close, no. In 1999, I had done Le Mans with Mercedes and I was also doing Formula Nippon [with the Leyjun team]. It was a fairly mediocre team but it was the only one left by the time all the deals were sorted. It was just my luck that it was the first year that the winner of the All-Japan F3 title didn’t get put straight into a top Formula Nippon drive.

“I did OK and I had a pole position and I had a second place at Fuji – I was picking up points everywhere. That was OK, but off the back of the Le Mans appearance there was a lot of talk about Le Mans, but I think that it was because I had become, in a way, infamous.

“I remember reading in Motorsport News at the time that Eddie Jordan was making a link with me but he had never even picked up the phone. I think he was leaking that story to the press to try and get some publicity for his team.

“I had been offered a seat in the DTM by Mercedes at that point for the following year, as well as a good seat in Formula Nippon and in GTs in Japan. I had some good offers on the table with some good teams and the chance to go out and make some half-decent money. As a driver

when you are coming up through the ranks, that is almost the position you dream of. You want to make some money.

“Those stages of any career are like a balancing act. Look at Mark Webber: he had sorted himself with Mercedes and was making money and then he took a massive step back to Formula 3000, into the unknown. He took a major risk and, fair play to him, it paid off. I, on the other hand, chose a different route.

“I knew DTM was a mega championship and there was always a chance I could have made it back to the F1 conversation from there. I didn’t have a manager or anything. I could discuss it with my family though and it seemed a no-brainer to me to sign a Mercedes contract for 2000.”

**MN sets the scene:** The young gun Peter Dumbreck’s big chance with Mercedes at Le Mans in 1999 turned into a farce with the CLR machines suffering from a major aerodynamic imbalance. Mark Webber flipped twice in practice and warm-up, while Dumbreck’s airborne shunt in the race was beamed live around the world. . .

**Question:** *Were you happy to race the Mercedes CLR in 1999 at Le Mans, or were you concerned after the flips in practice? Does it annoy you that your career is defined by some people by that crash?*

**Jonathan Astbury**  
**Via email**

**PD:** “I am quite black and white on these kinds of issues. Every time you get into a racing car, you put your absolute trust in the team. Have they put the wheels on

correctly? Is the suspension bolted up right? Have the brakes been bled and is there any pressure in them when you get to the end of the straight? You have to trust the guys.

“If the team said it was OK to drive, then I was ready to drive. So no, I wasn’t concerned about shunting.”  
**MN:** But weren’t some of the other drivers in the team a bit uncertain about stepping into the car . . . ? It was a very political situation for you to be in at that stage of your career . . .

**PD:** “Some of the others were vocal. Mark Webber was because Mercedes blamed him for his crashes and me for mine initially. I think they passed the buck a little bit. They were saying there was nothing wrong with the car and it was the drivers’ mistakes and that we had been too close to the cars in front. There was blame going everywhere.

“Mark didn’t really hold back and, certainly after his second accident on Saturday morning, he was adamant that all of the cars needed to be withdrawn from the race.

“Sill we went ahead and I hadn’t been in the situation Mark had been in. But after Mark’s second shunt on Saturday morning there was a photo and you could see the Merc up in the air – and that was his out-lap – you could see he was nowhere near any other car. After the first crash, because it wasn’t caught on camera and there were no pictures of it happening, all you could see was a wrecked car and people couldn’t really comprehend it. After the Saturday morning one, they couldn’t hide it and

*continued on page 24*



Famous events: Sebring in 2012 resulted in sixth in the LMP1 division



FEATURE



Dumbreck tackled the World Endurance Championship in 2012 for the JRM team



Dumbreck (c) was able to beat team-mate Schneider in a straight fight



All smiles: The Scotsman loved the Super GT Lexus SC430 in 2006

Mark was really shaken up by that. “Certainly we were apprehensive about going into the race, but it is the 24 Hours of Le Mans, so you are apprehensive regardless of what has gone before. It was the biggest race of my career up to that point.

“I had a bit of a wait to get into the car [in the race] because they wanted to cycle through the driver roster [Dumbreck was sharing with Nick Heidfeld and Christophe Bouchut]. The car was going well and we were running in third and when I got in, I was catching the Toyota of Thierry Boutsen. That put me in a situation. I was faster than him but I had been told not to go near any other cars... what was I supposed to do? I was just about to ask that question and all of a sudden I was upside down in the trees.”

**MN:** Did you shut your eyes?

**PD:** “From the take-off point to being on a stretcher, I don’t remember anything.”

**MN:** And do you get annoyed that it is the only thing that some people remember about you?

**PD:** “It is not really annoying. If I could have my time again, would I not go through that? Well, luckily, it did no harm to me so I don’t care much. I do suppose though, that for hundreds of years to come people will be watching that footage and it is a legacy. In 200 years’ time, people will be able to bring up YouTube – probably connected directly to their eye socket by then – and they will be viewing it.”

**Question: What did Bernd Schneider teach you when you were alongside him in the DTM?**

**Becky Donaldson**  
**Via email**

**PD:** “He is a character and there is no other ‘Mr DTM’. He is it. The way he won races and the way he conducted himself with supreme confidence was like no

other driver. He just knew how to do it.

“On my best days, I was right with him and could match him. I suppose one of my regrets of DTM was maybe not going about things the way I should have. I didn’t play the game, and you come to realise that the DTM is a huge game. It is very political and anyone who thinks that you can just rock up and dominate it wrong. There is plenty of evidence for this. Some amazing drivers like Tom Kristensen and Mika Hakkinen have gone in and not been able to cut it. That’s because if they [the series’ prime movers] don’t want you to win, you won’t. There are some very, very small increments [in the performances of the cars] that make all the difference.

“Bernd was able to make the difference and he had [HWA Motorsport boss] Gerhard Ungar on his side and Ungar could make the difference for Bernd as well. The DTM is all a massive jigsaw and you have to have every single thing in your favour to complete it.”

**MN:** Well you were close: you were third in the points in 2001...

**PD:** “In a straight fight with Bernd I could beat him and I did. I was a direct teammate to him in 2001. I remember saying to British journalist Charles Bradley after the second race at the opening meeting of the season at Hockenheim, where I had finished third in the mixed conditions, that I just didn’t have the traction of Bernd’s car and he just had more grip than me.

“Charles wrote that in his report of the race and as soon as that magazine had come out, I had Ungar on the phone saying ‘never, never speak to the media again – you are on your own now and I am not helping you any more’. So thanks Charles, you screwed my chances! I went from being easily the second-quickest car to being the last of the four HWA cars. I had a mega engineer but it took me until

the fourth meeting to start getting decent pace back in the car. It was at the Sachsenring and I took pole and Bernd was way back because something had happened to him. I won the first race there and then in the second race Mattias Ekstrom pushed me wide and I was running second to him. There was a safety car and they pulled Bernd in and wouldn’t let me pit even though I was the leading Mercedes.

“Bernd went on to win the race and I finished sixth and it became very clear that Bernd was the priority...”

“We went to the Lausitzring and I was leading the main race and Bernd was behind me and we are miles ahead of anyone. My engineer got told by Ungar that I was to let Bernd through. By then, Bernd had a huge lead in the points and he wasn’t going to be caught. My engineer complained to Norbert Haug about the instruction and Norbert overruled Ungar. They let me keep the win.

“By the second half of the year I was a match for him, certainly, but I was restricted from taking it to him. I felt I could have done a little better in myself and I was looking forward to the following season but, lo and behold, Jean Alesi arrived and I got pushed down to a semi-works car. By then, the year-old and two-year-old cars were miles off the ultimate pace.”

**Question: Which has been your favourite sportscar to drive?**

**Malcolm Munt**  
**Via email**

**PD:** “Easily, the best GT cars in the world to drive are the Super GT cars in Japan. They are just so good. I drove a Toyota Supra in 2005 and then I went into the little Lexus SC430.

“The Japanese GT cars have very little of the road car in them – they are proper





Dumbreck knows the tricks of the Nurburgring 24 Hours

racing cars. They are almost like a DTM car, in effect, but it is less dependent on aero.

“Going to Japan after my five-year stint in DTM was a real breath of fresh air. Back then the rules were more free and the engines were less restricted. They had some aero, don’t get me wrong, but there was also a tyre war going on out there.

“Any championship that has a tyre war means that you have three seconds per lap on most tracks just with a good set of rubber. In most other GT series where you are running on spec tyres, they never push the window. In Japan, though, they push the window as far open as they possibly can. We had Yokohama, Dunlop, Michelin and Bridgestone all throwing everything at it.

“I remember the first day I drove a Super GT car in 2005. It was a ‘wow’ moment. You could slide the car and hold it on opposite lock and it would then grip up and go again. The cars were just amazing. Back then there was no traction control and there were sequential gearboxes, there was no ABS and we had steel brakes. You really had to drive those cars. They were a driving

machine and the races were good.

“Again, politics were quite a thing in Japan and they would add weight to your car if you won. I guess that was the start of balance of performance, and that gradually became the normal elsewhere.”

**Question: If you could choose two sportscar team-mates, who would they be? And who has been your favourite person to share with?**

**Steven Nye**  
**Via email**

**PD:** “Well, there is something we haven’t touched on yet and that is that you need luck to win championships and big races. Who knows how that luck is generated? Someone like Tom Kristensen clearly has his share...”

“I know I have had a lot of luck in my career and, if I am honest, I think I burnt out all my luck. I have had three massive shunts which I have walked away from that could well have done me in. Every time I would walk away from one, I know I have used up a bit more of my fortune.

“But also many is the time I have been in a car that should have won and I was quick enough to win and I did the job

to win but it hasn’t for whatever reason.

“I had a mega winning streak at the start of my career and then things petered out and it is not that I got slower, I just didn’t have the rub of the green at those times.”

**MN:** So what you are saying is that you would like two very lucky team-mates?

**PD:** “Exactly, and the two luckiest men I know are Lucas Luhr and Tom Kristensen. I will opt for them.”

**MN:** And the second part of the question: who has been your favourite person to share with?

**PD:** “Well it has to be someone you get on well with, someone you could go and have a beer and chill out with. Darren Turner is certainly up there on that list. I think we have got a fairly similar driving style, we are both quite smooth and we don’t tax the car too much.

“I don’t know how he gets away with his lack of fitness though. We are like chalk and cheese when it comes to that. Despite that, when he is in the car, he will never fall off the pace and he is so consistent, so let’s stick Dazza down as one of my favourites.”

**MN sets the scene:** Since 2006, Peter

Dumbreck has been a regular at the Nurburgring 24 Hours on the fearsome Nordschleife as a Falken tyres factory driver. He has scored three class podiums, one of which was third overall in 2015.

**Question: How scary is the Nordschleife? What are its secrets?**

**Damien Doherty**  
**Via email**

**PD:** “There are certain years where it is far from frightening. It can go like a dream. But then there are other years where it has started snowing, for example, or there can be heavy rain in the middle of the night, or the fog can come in.

“If you can get the ideal conditions it is a delight to drive. You feel hooked up, you are in the groove and it is such fun when the car feels good.”

**MN:** Would you say you know every inch of it?

**PD:** “Probably 90% plus. But the track is an ever-changing thing. When you go back after a year, they might have resurfaced part of it or the kerbs might have changed. But after you go back and drive it, it all comes flooding back.

“When I started racing there, I was in an Opel DTM car, which was one of the quickest things on the track. There is another example of my bad luck – I was driving the car and doing the perfect job but my team-mate hit a Renault Clio in the night and it was the sister car which won the race – I could easily have been in the sister car: that is fate...”

“But from that point until now, it has changed. It used to be that some corners you would brake and even change down gear for – now those corners are flat out. It is not that you are carrying any less speed but the cars have more grip, the tyres and the technology is better...”

**MN:** But there is still a huge amount of traffic out there, all at varying speeds...

**PD:** “You have to treat the backmarkers with respect because they can put you out of the race immediately. That happens in every 24-hour race. But the more 24-hour races you do, the more you understand what they are likely to do. You almost have to drive with a radar on and the other thing you need is a good memory.

“You will pick out up to 10 cars – probably only five – that will be a problem to you during the race. They will do the most random things every time you come up to them and your alarm bells have to go off. You have to remember them, but then there are other cars that you know you can get by them cleanly.”

**Question: What motorsport achievement are you most proud of?**  
**Russell Scobbie**  
**Via email**

**PD:** “If you talk about race wins, it has to be at Macau in 1998. That win was just like a dream. It was an amazing feeling to conquer one of the hardest circuits in the world. In the end, I won it by 0.003s – and you can’t even snap your fingers that quickly, so just wow.

“When you come into motorsport I suppose your first goal is to get into Formula 1 but the other ambition is to actually make money at being a racing driver and, arguably, that is the harder part. To be paid to drive a racing car week in, week out and know that when you are out training you are working to a purpose and you have got a wage coming in, that is a massive thing.

“I ended up getting paid in 1998 but everything I had done up to that point had been a massive expense and I had to find cash. The tide turned and I still work in the industry now and get paid. That is a dream in itself.” ■



Best of rivals: Dumbreck and Darren Turner drove for Aston Martin

**“I think I used up all my good fortune early on”**

**Peter Dumbreck**



## FEATURE



Walter Rohrl delighted in denying Audi the 1982 WRC

# REVENGE: BEST SERVED COLD

*As in 2022, a new rally category debuted on the Monte Carlo Rally 40 years ago, while an old score was settled by the winner – writes Nick Garton*



Monte 1982: the sweet taste of victory over Audi inspired Walter Rohrl

**L**ittle has changed in many ways from the world of 1982. Then as now, a new World Rally Championship season began in Monte Carlo, with the FIA's sporting arm, FISA, seeking to end spiralling costs and falling manufacturer numbers with a new category that was intended to revitalise the series.

That is the role which hybrid Rally 1 seeks to play in 2022, while 40 years ago the new formula was the now-mythical Group B.

FISA's logic was simple: it was cheaper to build a competition car and make it look like a showroom model than to approach things in the opposite direction. Throughout the 1970s, Group 4 had cost manufacturers absurd sums in order to conjure supercar performance from their humdrum saloons. To the public at large, however, the money was wasted because a Ford Escort still looked like an Escort.

Jean-Marie Balestre, the FISA president, was a showman first and foremost. The French firebrand wanted to see spectacular cars that took your breath away and, using mid-engined Group 4 cars like the Lancia Stratos

and Renault 5 Turbo as his template, Group B was thus developed.

Essentially, Group B allowed manufacturers to take the centre section of a road car, from the front firewall to the b-pillar, and then build a spaceframe at either end to cradle the engine, transmission and ancillaries.

You could hang appropriate suspension off this structure and dress it however you wanted within the maximum permitted dimensions. This was the route taken by Lancia, which began work on its 037 Rallye model by taking the little Lancia Beta Montecarlo coupe and rebuilding it exactly how FISA had intended.

Other manufacturers took a more conservative approach. The Opel Ascona 400 and prototypes like the Ford Escort RS1700T and Peugeot 305 V6 Sport were all front-engined, rear-wheel-drive cars with only a smattering of Kevlar in their construction. The same process was followed in the 1600cc category, where the Citroen Visa Trophée and Talbot Samba Rallye were built as front-wheel-drive cars to Group B regulations.

The odd men (and women) out resided in Ingolstadt, home of Audi Sport. At the December 1979 FISA meeting in which the Group B formula was rubber-

stamped, Audi's representative at the table famously waited until the dying moments to ask whether the WRC's ban on four-wheel drive might be lifted.

Other delegates, worn out by a day of horse-trading and ruminations, swiftly agreed in the belief that Audi wanted to run its Dakar jeeps on events like the Ivory Coast and Safari rallies. They received a nasty shock when the Audi Quattro was unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show a couple of months later.

Through its debut season of 1981, the Quattro had proven shatteringly fast on loose surfaces, cumbersome on Tarmac and fragile in all cases. Audi chose not to build new Group B cars for 1982, promising FISA that it would do so for 1983, as it sought to find reliability. If the Quattro could dominate on the loose-surface events that made up the majority of the calendar, then Quattro technology would carry Audi to the 1982 championship. *Vorsprung durch Technik*, as they said in Ingolstadt.

There was a fly in Audi's ointment, however. Or rather, there was a very angry German who nursed an implacable will to beat the Quattro into submission and humble Audi's vaunted technology. That man was Walter Rohrl.

The seeds of this vendetta had been sown back in 1980, when Rohrl was





The Renault 5 Turbo set FISA's Group B template



Rohrl chose Mercedes over Audi for 1981 WRC

busy storming to his first drivers' World championship with Fiat. It has always been important to German motor manufacturers to have native drivers at the wheel and, in Rohrl, Germany just happened to have the best rally driver in the world at that time.

What's more, Rohrl was Bavarian: born and raised just a stone's throw from the Audi factory. With Fiat following Ford out of the WRC at the end of the year, it appeared to Audi Sport team principal Walter Treser that the stars were aligning rather nicely.

Rohrl was invited in to see the team's preparations and to drive the test hack Quattro while a contract was readied. Yet unbeknown to Audi, there was another suitor that also wanted Rohrl on its books for 1981: Mercedes-Benz.

The sleeping giant of Stuttgart had been absent from motorsport since 1955 but it was now planning a five-year campaign in the WRC. The team would start off using Mercedes' big V8 coupes but the plan was to create a mid-engined Group B car which, thanks to Audi's rule change, would also be permitted to run with four-wheel drive.

After weighing his options carefully, Rohrl elected to sign for Mercedes alongside Ari Vatanen. This prompted a furious outburst from Audi in the

German press, with Treser effectively declaring that the World champion had the morals of an alley cat.

For a devout man like Rohrl, who believed that he had simply made a business decision, the attack was as unfathomable as it was unforgivable.

"I was only two or three times in my life going fast," Rohrl says of his career these days. "It was when I was angry."

More drama followed, however. In testing for the 1981 Monte Carlo Rally, Rohrl had an unfortunate encounter with a delivery truck, which had ambled onto a live test stage.

Even after a quarter of a century, the idea of Mercedes returning to motorsport only to risk another incident that put spectators' lives at risk spooked the board in Stuttgart. Its WRC plans were cancelled on the spot, with both Vatanen and Rohrl being paid a year's salary and told to go away.

Vatanen did his national service in the Finnish army while Rohrl took up an offer from Porsche. There was precious little budget for rallying at Weissach, the company's fortunes being tied to its endurance programme, but Rohrl didn't need much money thanks to his Mercedes payment and he enjoyed hustling the Almeras team's 911s around enormously.

What he craved, however, was a chance

to tackle Audi in unarmed combat and this arrived in 1982 when Rothmans moved its considerable budget across to Opel's works squad. Rohrl's career had begun with the team and, while the Ascona was a very traditional car, it was relatively nimble – at least next to the bulky Quattro – and had rorty power.

Thus the Group B era began in Monte Carlo without a pukka Group B car on the entry list, save for Citroen's little Visa. Instead it was a showdown between Rohrl and Audi. The air was frigid and the knitwear was lurid but the roads were bone dry and clear of snow, which put Audi on the back foot straight away.

"I think everything is good for us, it's dry, clean roads, it should be good for us," Rohrl said before the start. "I am quite

**"I was only going fast when I was angry..."**

**Walter Rohrl**

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Waiting in the wings: proper Group B cars came later in 1982 season



Mikkola's brilliant Leg Two couldn't keep Rohrl from claiming Monte



Michele Mouton pushed hard to close Rohrl down but crashed out

[optimistic] that we get a good result."

The opening stage was won by Guy Frequelin's Porsche with Hannu Mikkola's Quattro in second and Rohrl cantering to fifth as he got comfortable with the conditions. His Opel then swept imperiously past the field on SS2, the 27-mile Bellecombette test. This was the first of five wins that Rohrl would claim in the nine-stage opening leg, while Mikkola was forced to drive for 12 miles on a puncture and dropped to eighth.

The second Audi of Michele Mouton made a bid for glory at the start of the second leg, the Frenchwoman taking her first stage win on SS10 and climbing to third in the order. Then on the next stage she demolished her Quattro and a substantial part of a house, hospitalising co-driver Fabrizia Pons in the process.

Mikkola meanwhile had a sublime run, winning nine of the 13 stages and climbing back to second behind Rohrl, albeit 1m 15s adrift. There were still 10 more stages to go, however, and Mikkola found himself unable to match the nimble two-wheel-drive cars on any of them. Instead, Rohrl claimed four more stage wins to cross the line 3m49s clear.

Audi would come back stronger through the rest of the 1982 campaign, but began to trip itself up strategically. Team leader Mikkola endured a torrid

run of accidents and mechanical failures, making Mouton the most successful member of the squad with wins in Portugal, the Acropolis and Brazil.

Audi Sport should have put its weight behind her, but was rather too focused on Mikkola and even allowed part-timer Stig Blomqvist to steal a few points from Mouton occasionally. This was a gift to Rohrl, harrying the Audis and claiming podium finishes routinely.

Victory on the Ivory Coast sealed his title, although after falling out with team boss Tony Fall on the RAC Rally, he never bothered going to Paris to collect his trophy. Rohrl had already made his point back in Monte Carlo, after all.

"If I won [other rallies], I was happy for three minutes," Rohrl says. "But if I won Monte Carlo I would wake up after even three days and feel: 'oh yeah! You won Monte Carlo!'"

Group B would meanwhile gain momentum, with Lancia, Audi, Opel, Nissan, Porsche, Toyota, Peugeot, MG, Citroen and Ford all competing for outright wins during the category's brief lifespan. The era is best remembered for its wildly powerful mid-engined four-wheel-drive cars but it's worth remembering that nobody - except Mercedes - had yet conceived of such things in Monte Carlo 40 years ago. ■



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# GETTING OVER THE LINE

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*Motul is the go-to option for Nissan GT-R fanatic and serial collector Shaun Lawless and he tells us about his passion*

Photos: Anthony Rain, Shaun Lawless

**E**ngineer, Nissan GT-R fan and ex-chairman of the GT-R Owners Club Shaun Lawless has always loved cars. But a few years ago, the passionate GT-R owner managed to fulfill a dream. Through his contacts in Japan, he bought one of only four Motul-liveried Nismo GT1 GT-R racers. Shaun shares with us his story about how he came to own such an extraordinary car.

**Question: Shaun, how did your GT-R journey start?**

**Shaun Lawless:** "I started off in the early 1990s with an R33 GT-R and got involved in the GT-R Owners Club pre-social media. We had a forum that was a fantastic place to be in those days. I had the R33 modified, and we did a lot of trackdays in it. Those really were the glory days. In the late 1990s, I bought an R34 GT-R and by this time I had got to know a lot of tuners and engine builders in Japan. Through our connection with the club, we were later invited over for the launch of the R35 GT-R when that came out in 2007. Social media came along and killed off the forums, so we stopped doing a lot of the tours and trackdays."

**Question: How did you come to own a GT1 race car? You can't just pop into a Nissan dealership for one of those...**

**SL:** "I got to know some very influential people at Nissan and Nismo and knew the honorary president of the GT-R club at the time well. I was familiar with the GT1 racing category, which was the homologation specials."

"As time went on, they introduced LMP at Le Mans and GT racing so GT1 became its own FIA-approved world series. To meet the regulations a car had to have sold a minimum of 20 units. Nismo decided to enter the series in 2009. As Nissan already had the GT-R, had sold 1000 units, and it shared a chassis with the race car, Nismo were able to build four race cars. The GT1 regulations at that time were up to 600hp, and some people say it was one of the best periods of racing because of the lack of driver aids and silencers."

"Nismo entered the GT1 world series and competed in it in 2010 and 2011, winning the



Lawless has the original 'Hakosuka' Nissan GT-R



Fanatic Shaun Lawless had to go to great lengths to get his hands on the race Nismo Nissan GT1 machine



Motul and the GT-R make a perfect partnership drivers' championship that year. The cars were run by the guy who set up the Time Attack series and a tuning company called Sumo Power. But then the FIA killed it off in 2012 and Nismo asked for all the cars back.

"I knew a lot of the people involved and asked if I could buy one and was told in no uncertain terms that wouldn't be possible. But because of some contacts I had, I received a call sometime later to go to the Spa 24 Hours so Nismo could vet me as a suitable potential owner. I ended up buying a completely original factory GT1 race car. I even got the build certificate from the president of Nismo, and all its race history. The only thing not original about that car is its colour. It was wrapped. I've owned it since 2012."

**Question: What is the connection between Motul, you and this car?**

**SL:** "The link with Motul came about because of its strong association with Nismo. At the time the Motul distributor in the UK asked me to put my car on display at the NEC in Birmingham and in return I asked for some products. I sent him an email with the specification of the exact oil I need and had a response 10 minutes later."

"What I later learned was this was a very specific race oil developed for the Nismo GT-R and I'm told it's really rare stuff that's made in



Lawless likes to turn heads with demonstrations limited numbers when it's needed. When it arrives, the packaging says 'special development race oil, not for sale'. And since then, I've had a great relationship with Motul."

**Question: You trust Motul for your cars. What is it about the brand's products that you like?**

**SL:** "I think Motul's products are exceptional. It's a true premium brand. People don't realise the range of products Motul makes, from the oils to the care products. You can't fault them. I'm not a race team so I don't get through gallons and gallons of oil. I also like that I get asked to bring my cars to certain things."

**Question: What do you use the car for?**

**SL:** "I can't race the car as there's no race series, and it's too noisy for trackdays so I'm very limited with what I can do with it. But because of its rarity I do a lot of events and festivals with it. It gets a lot of attention. I must be very selective with what I do because you can't easily get parts for it."

**Question: You own a third GT-R. Can you tell us more about that?**

**SL:** "I've always had a passion for old cars. I also own the first GT-R, the 'Hakosuka', which was made in 1970 in very low numbers."

*"I use a very specific oil developed by Motul for the car"*



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## FEATURE

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

# RACING BETWEEN THE LINES

*Enforcing track limits has become a modern conundrum in UK motorsport, so **Graham Keilloh** explores the reasons why and what the solutions are*

Out of bounds? A common sight at UK race circuits

**“Y**ou watch at Thruxton, well there might as well have not been a chicane because nobody went through it. And you’re going ‘what’s this all about?’” Junior Saloon Car Championship coordinator Dave Beecroft tells Motorsport News.

His words will likely elicit some recognition. ‘Track limits’ these days is a common refrain, and lament, in motorsport discourse. And this includes in UK national racing as much as anywhere. Just what is punished, and what the punishment is, for allowing your car to veer outside of the track’s boundaries rarely seems all that straightforward.

It’s odd too, as UK circuit racing’s rules on the matter (see sidebar) seem clear. Plus, in most sports, the lines are sacrosanct. Football, rugby, tennis... But not motorsport. Or, at least, not entirely.

So what’s going on? Many point with justification at the modern growing presence of vast Tarmac run-off areas, installed on safety grounds instead of gravel, grass, walls and the like. They have an unintended consequence of removing the physical penalty for going off, and when you add in the racing drivers’ never-changing desire to take any advantage competitors now happily explore the circuit’s out-of-bounds if there’s a lap time benefit. And if they can get away with it...

British Racing and Sports Car Club chairman and British GT race director Peter Daly tells MN: “Typical example is Copse corner at Silverstone where the difference between taking the corner within the white lines and taking the corner beyond the kerbs can be as much as half a second, and that’s in a car that’s lapping at about 65 seconds.”

Yet there are other things going on too. For starters there are the kerbs, which these days are lower, as British Touring

Car champion Tim Harvey explains to MN. “The problem is that circuit kerbs have to be suitable for bike racers as well as cars and by their nature they can’t be high-raised kerbs because bikers can hit them and injure themselves,” he says.

The cars have changed as well. “The technology of suspension today is so different to just 10 years ago,” Daly adds. “So cars are able to go over all sorts of terrain and maintain grip.

“When I was at Jim Russell race driver school 23 years ago we couldn’t go on the kerbs at the Old Hairpin [at Donington Park] because it was a great big lump of concrete and it would really unsettle the car. You couldn’t go on the kerbs on the exit of Copse corner at Silverstone because the rear wheels would lose traction as they bounced. But now with suspension damping that you’ve got these things are overcome by very clever systems.”

So, all taken together, while track limits used to in effect be self-policing now they

are not. And it’s in turn created problems for authorities.

Harvey continues: “I do believe all competitors should respect track limits, but competitors will always gain the fastest route they possibly can through a corner.

“It [track limits] used to be policed by observers on marshals’ posts but that was very inconsistent; when you have a pack of cars coming through the observer can’t possibly pick up every single car.”

It can overwhelm race control as well. “For certain club championships it’s not unusual to have maybe 50 or even 100 track limits [reports] during a qualifying session,” Daly explains. “And you could have a major incident that’s taken place on the circuit and the delay on the clerk of the course being a) informed because of the amount of radio traffic you’ve got or b) actually trying to work out what’s happening with this track-limit situation you can miss vital five, 10, 15, 20 seconds to make a decision on what’s going to

## What the Motorsport UK regulations (or the ‘Blue Book’) say...

**12.21.2.** Drivers must use the track at all times and may not leave the track without a justifiable reason. For the avoidance of doubt:

(a) The white lines defining the track edges are considered to be part of the track.

(b) A driver will be judged to have left the track if any wheel of the car goes completely beyond either the outer edge of any kerb or the white line where there is no kerb.

**12.22.1.** Breaches of 12.21.2 may be penalised using the following:

(a) In qualifying if the lap on which the breach occurred is faster than any previous lap then that lap time should be disqualified. Note should be made on the result sheet of any times disqualified.

(b) During races the following scale of penalties should be applied:

- 1st breach – no penalty
- 2nd breach – warning flag
- 3rd breach – five-second penalty added to race time
- 4th breach – 10-second penalty added to race time
- 5th breach – drive through penalty
- 6th breach – black flag



Tarmac run-off, low kerbs and modern suspension allow excursions



BTCC champ Harvey has concern

**“At Copse you can gain up to half a second”**

*Peter Daly*



# FEATURE



Some tracks use physical restraints to enforce limits

## Should we just let drivers get on with it?

There is an option, perhaps a glaring one, that would solve the track-limit issue. Well, solve it in a sense anyway. How about we just let the drivers get on with it, and use whatever route their cars will withstand regardless of whether it's within the lines or not?

"I don't think that really flies," Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers tells Motorsport News. "It's a free for all, it's a bit like Dakar isn't it? Which way do you want to go across the sand dunes?"

"A race track is designed to present a challenge to drivers and if you don't have a delineation of the limits of the track, clearly that's not conducive to safety or indeed fair competition. At what point are you able to cut a corner or a chicane? You say well just straight line all the corners at Thruxton and don't even try going round them, clearly nobody would agree that that was a very good policy."

British GT's race director Peter Daly admits though it's a 'solution' that's crossed his mind too, though logic has got the better of it.

"I've thought about that many a time, but the answer's no," Daly tells MN. "If you turned a blind eye and said we're not going to measure or monitor track limits, get on with it, you'll have people in all sorts of places."

"You've got the safety issue and you've potentially got the legal problem as well that when we sign on to run a race and we sign on with a permit the track is licenced, and the rules state that the track is between the white lines, so you're now going down the route of running a race at a venue but not using the licenced circuit."

happen next, and that's because the track limits become a distraction, and they are a major distraction in race control."

Some try physical restraints, such as tyre stacks and plastic 'floppy' markers on corner apexes. But these too have caused problems, and it came into focus at Croft's BTCC meeting last year where the Mini Challenge's Ronan Pearson had his windscreen damaged by a dislodged floppy.

Harvey adds: "There was some tyres put on the inside of Sunny Out which one car clipped and the second car piled into them. Now the second car hadn't done anything wrong, he was following on the line and was presented with a stack of heavy tyres in front of him. So when circuits say 'oh well cars shouldn't cut the circuit', well the car that had £10,000s worth of damage didn't cut the corner, so how is that fair?"

"You wouldn't allow a stack of tyres to be placed in the middle of the road anyway so why put them where they can be knocked into the middle of the road?"

Harvey therefore instead supports monitoring track limits using cameras and on-kerb pressure pads, as employed increasingly at MotorSport Vision circuits.

"The pressure plates obviously don't damage cars because they're not putting an obstacle in the way of a fast-moving race car," he notes. "When MSV introduced pressure plates and cameras

initially there was a distrust of it but now there is 100% trust in that system and you don't get people complaining that it's inconsistent or random. It should [at least] be in all corners where track limits are a problem."

"The pressure-plate system works so well because it's not damaging to the cars, bike racers and car racers can use the same system, but it does require investment."

That last point is the obvious stumbling block though. Motorsport, certainly national motorsport, tends not to be flush with spare cash.

This was noted in the aftermath of the cited Croft meeting by Ben Taylor, group CEO of the British Automobile Racing Club that operates Croft as well as Thruxton and Pembrey circuits.

"We will look at things; we always consider how we can improve what we do," he told MN at the time. "Nobody wants to have tyres there but the people that think that we're just going to put pressure pads in there, if they want to pay for them then that would be absolutely fantastic. But they have absolutely no understanding of the finances of running a race meeting. We haven't got the finances to put pressure pads and automated systems into every corner."

Harvey thinks though it should be a fundamental. "They [circuits] have to invest in their Tarmac, they have to invest in certain things, this for me is a priority

otherwise you can't expect to be having a permit and running races," he says.

Daly has noticed another potential pressure-pad drawback though. "They have worked well in the past but what we're now finding is that drivers are getting wise to taking the corner without going on to the sensor, and that might be through breaching the track limit on the entry to the corner or corner cutting," he observes.

Daly has also thought of a more left-field solution. "[In] wet [sessions] there's a tendency for very few track-limit infringements and the reason for that is that the kerbs don't have any traction in the wet, so people don't go on them," he notes.

"One solution might be to have a wet-kerb system where kerbs were permanently damp so you had some sort of trickle-water system. The downside to that, the driver might well be out of control as he crosses it and it doesn't help him regain his control."

Another common modern lament around track limits is on consistency. In addition to the varying monitoring methods outlined, the extent of monitoring the transgressions plus the penalties applied can vary by circuit, by club, and even by corner.

And for Harvey establishing consistency is key. "That's my big problem," he says. "They're not consistent in terms of how they're

policed, they're not consistent in where they're policed, the deterrents for stopping people breaking track limits are not consistent either.

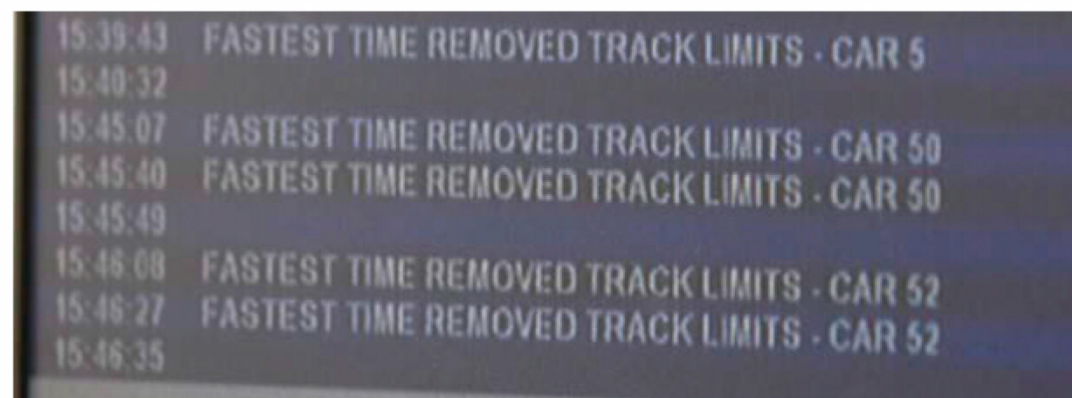
"If a rule is to be enforced it has to be enforced consistently."

Daly notes other factors are afoot too: "[At] certain venues the rules are very easily enforced, other venues you have to then have some sort of compromise to make it practical. That's why I always say to [drivers] 'these are the corners that we'll be monitoring', and normally from experience they're the corners where there is the most to be gained."

"We rely massively on volunteers in UK motorsport and it's a very challenging role being a clerk of the course. And there are certain times where you can have people who are just overwhelmed by the amount of incidents or track limits that are going off, and at that point they might just say 'we shan't do it anymore'. I personally have not done it but I have witnessed it where I've had to have sympathy with the person because it's just become impractical to do."

Harvey adds: "I think it's up to [Motorsport UK] to say 'OK this is a rule in our blue book about track limits and this is how it should be enforced in a consistent way that doesn't involve putting obstacles in the way of fast-moving race cars'."

And fortunately for Harvey, and everyone else, the governing body agrees



Track-limit violations can be a major distraction for race control



Chambers is looking at the issue

**"We need to establish what the rules are"**

**Hugh Chambers**





Cameras and pressure pads are at MSV tracks

The way it used to be...

“I saw a picture of Oulton Park from way back when, I should think not long after it was first opened,” racer and coach Calum Lockie tells Motorsport News, “where it was a stretch of Tarmac going through the park with two white lines and no kerbs in sight. And the caption said in those days if you left the circuit you were deemed to have retired...”

Not that Lockie thinks that should be our solution to the modern-day track-limits conundrum. “I certainly think that’s a little extreme because we all make mistakes and we fall off and we like to try and regain [the track] so we can finish our race, maybe even get a position,” he continues.

“But part of the skill is staying on the track, pushing as hard as you can while maintaining contact with the track, which is what you’re meant to do, and I just think that has been eroded and eroded and eroded and to some degree left open to interpretation, which I think causes a certain degree of confusion and it is part of the problem.

“What I really would love to see is from FIA top-level motorsport right down to grassroots clubs motorsport the rule should be exactly the same for everyone at every corner, then no-one can be confused about what the situation is. There are either track limits or it’s a free for all, and if there are track limits then it should be at every corner, every circuit, everywhere.”

there is a problem and is indeed on the case. “We’re working on that [track limits] as part of a much broader initiative which is around driving standards,” Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers confirms to MN.

“There isn’t a unilateral approach and I think that has not been helpful. As a competitor, in any sport, it is good to know very clearly what the rules are and what you can and can’t do and we can perhaps do a better job on that.

“There has been variability in terms of the enforcement of the transgression over that white line and there are a number of different schools of thought on this as to whether you just make it absolutely binary, and where you have a situations where there’s a degree of flexibility.”

As for technological solutions, Chambers adds: “[There is] the application of some of the new software technology which I saw at the Walter Hayes Trophy which is GT Apps, it’s a very clever little bit of technology which allows for an aggregation of reports that are brought from observers around the track so they come back to be acted upon swiftly.”

Taylor for one reckons a firm line is needed. “I tend to have a very simplistic attitude towards regulations which is if they’re black and white then they work and if they’re grey then they don’t,” he says, “and if things are tolerated or excused for whatever reason then that



Gravel used to be a deterrent

just gives everybody carte blanche to behave how everybody else behaves.

“It’s a governing body issue because it’s not something that a club can take action on unilaterally. And the best analogy I can draw is the outlawing of the tackle from behind in football and, at the time, everybody said you’ll ruin the game, you’ll end up with six people on each team by the end of the match, and the truth is that a couple of people got some early red cards, everybody realised that they couldn’t do it anymore and they changed their behaviour.”

And for Chambers, before getting into discussions about monitoring methods, the rules, and the penalties, for track-limit violations need to be firmed up.

“I don’t disagree that this is an issue that needs to be addressed by the sport’s regulators, Motorsport UK,” he says, “but there’s a number of points in the process and the first one is establishing exactly what the rules are and the application of those rules at individual events and at individual venues, and that’s where there is work to be done even before you get to the point of pressure pads and measuring whether or not people have transgressed.

“And then there’s the question of what you do about it. Is it one strike and you’re out; is it three strikes? And then if it is three strikes what form of penalties are deployed from there and so on and so forth.

“And then you get into the debate about physical measures at circuits to stop competitors cutting a chicane for example. All of these subjects are all being discussed at the moment and I don’t want to pre-empt the outcome of that but I certainly intend that before we start the racing season proper we’ll have got a clear view on this.

“We need to make sure that we’re absolutely crystal clear in terms of the rules on this but then we also need to be crystal clear on the application of penalties if people have transgressed.” ■



Use of trackside markers to enforce track limits caused controversy at last year’s Croft BTCC meeting



## COLUMNIST

## MAX ESTERSON

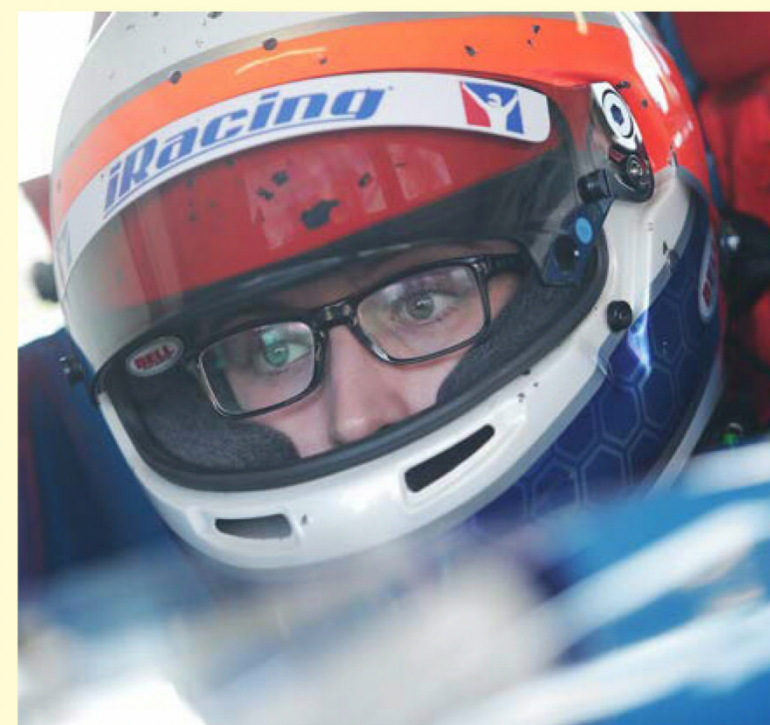


*The 19-year-old Walter Hayes Trophy winner from New York is continuing his UK adventure in GB3*

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



He has adapted well to GB3 car



Young American has his eyes on the GB3 title

**M**y racing took off when I was aged 10 or so, when I got into sim racing on iRacing. My older brother got gifted a steering wheel and pedal set, he used it for a bit and then I started using it and I got really into it.

Then I realised when I was 13 or 14 that I was getting quite good at it so I put a lot of time and effort in. I never got into a go-kart until I was almost 16, but moving into real-life racing was always something I wanted to do. My dad was a motorsport engineer in the 1980s and I've grown up watching all forms of racing.

iRacing is a lot closer to the real thing than a lot of people think. I could tell you a lot of tracks with my eyes closed, and I also have learned about changing set-ups. When I first got into a racing car everything made more sense and felt a lot more comfortable than karting.

At the end of 2020, my first car racing season in F1600 in the US, we were scoping out the options for '21, so we went to the UK to do

some late-2020 Formula Ford races and then decided to do the end-of-year Festival at Brands Hatch and Walter Hayes Trophy at Silverstone, with Low Dempsey Racing.

My first time at the Festival was daunting because I'd never raced a car in the wet; my first time in the wet was in the pre-event testing. My heat was wet and I finished third, then my semi-final was wet, I finished sixth and ended up sixth in the final in the wet as well.

For 2021 my options were either to do a full UK Formula Ford season or stay in the US and maybe start on the Road to Indy ladder. Formula Ford was the easy choice because it was pretty much a third of the cost even of USF2000 and I was able to do 70 days in a car last year which is pretty insane. Plus it's a super-good competition and great cars to learn in.

Initially I lacked assertiveness in FF1600 races, but the pace was always there and I had a super-consistent season and without dropped scores I had the most points of anyone. I did the end-of-year events with the Team USA Scholarship, and I finished second in the Festival then won the Walter Hayes.

It was definitely bittersweet after the

Festival final knowing I was 0.13 seconds off winning after starting the final 13th, which was just insane. In Thursday and Friday testing I was probably the guy to beat, then the semi was a bit of a disaster. It was pouring rain and I just didn't drive well and the rest of the field had new tyres on and we chose to save them.

Come the Hayes I didn't want to let that one slip away after the week before at the Festival, I needed to win that one for the team.

I reckon the difference for me in those end-of-year events was having a bit more confidence and focusing ahead, and when an opportunity to make a move presented itself I just took it, there was no waiting. Plus I defended hard and became a more selfish driver.

For my racing in 2022 my choice was between GB3 or again Road to Indy, and GB3 made more sense money wise, plus there's unrestricted testing and I wanted to stay in Europe longer. I'll therefore be racing in GB3 this year with Douglas Motorsport.

I first tested a GB3 car last August at Anglesey for two days and it went super well, I went the quickest the team had ever gone there really. And I was pretty comfortable, compared to a Formula Ford the car was actually quite tame and easy to drive. I'm due about now to test 2022's GB3 car for the first time; I don't think it'll be too different to the old car from what I've heard but I'm definitely interested to try it out.

The ultimate goal for this year is to go for the championship, which is definitely a lofty goal but I said the same last year and I led the championship for a lot of the season, so it's certainly possible.

As for my ultimate aims, Formula 1 would be fantastic and IndyCars I'd love to end up in. Anything getting paid to drive would be great, but it would be super cool to stay in single-seaters.



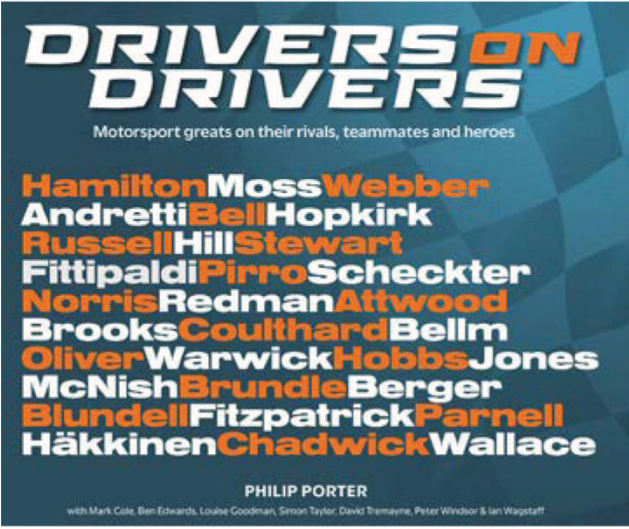
Esterson late last year took a fine Walter Hayes win

*"When an opportunity to make a move presented itself I just took it"*



# WHAT'S ON

## BOOK REVIEW



Philip Porter's work offers a real insight

### Drivers on Drivers, by Philip Porter

It is often assumed that racing drivers would rather chew on a razor blade than praise a fellow pilot. Drivers on Drivers, the recently published book by prolific writer Philip Porter, goes a long way to debunk that. Over its 144 pages it explores with 31 drivers, most of who are towering figures, what stands out for them about their own driving heroes, friends, team-mates and rivals. In many cases the discussions are strikingly candid and detailed. The drivers who contribute are

impressive both in their status and their range of era: from Sir Lewis Hamilton and Lando Norris through to Sir Stirling Moss and Tony Brooks, with Sir Jackie Stewart and Mario Andretti between. As these names suggest, the lion's share of the interviewees are Formula 1 drivers, but it's not exclusive as there are sportscar greats such as Derek Bell and Brian Redman, rally icon Paddy Hopkirk and saloon legend John Fitzpatrick. Each driver gets their own straight question-and-answer conversation and the interviews are of a high quality.

Who does Hamilton rank as his quickest team-mate? What is Stewart's in-depth lowdown on what he learned from countryman Jim Clark? What was the worrying piece of luggage Hopkirk's co-driver carried in the cab with them during the London-Sydney Marathon? It's all in there. It adds up to an absorbing and enlightening read. It's for a good cause too, as if you buy direct from publisher Porter Press International £11 of the hardback's £30 price goes to cancer charity Hope for Tomorrow.

Graham Keilloh

## TV GUIDE

Following hard on the heels of the Dakar and Monte Carlo Rally, the latest Formula E season kicks off this weekend – and with a double header no less. Eurosport 2 gets you into the mood for the live action with a review of the previous FE season at 1700hrs-1800hrs this (Thursday) evening, shown again in Friday's wee hours at 0100hrs-0200hrs. Freesports this week has a diverse mix of motorsport to watch. This starts with E-Andros Trophy ice racing action tomorrow at 0600hrs-0700hrs and again at

1700hrs-1800hrs, then there's more of it on Saturday at 0900hrs-1000hrs and 1400hrs-1500hrs. The channel also shows a Tour European Rally season review tomorrow at 1430hrs-1500hrs, while on Monday it has club action with the British Automobile Racing Club's highlights show from its Brands Hatch meeting shown at 0700hrs-0830hrs. And skiing even further off piste, the Discovery Turbo channel on Saturday morning at 0800hrs-0830hrs has Chasing Classic Cars, wherein a Bentley Le Mans

replica is flown in. Secrets of the Transport Museum, based at the inimitable Brooklands venue, has its second series start on Yesterday at 2000hrs-2100hrs on Tuesday. Sky Sports F1 meanwhile continues its round-by-round plod through last season's Formula 1 campaign, including practice sessions, with it today reaching the Qatar round with practice starting at 1130hrs. The channel reaches the infamous Abi Dhabi conclusion on Saturday.

Graham Keilloh

**LIVE TV**

**FORMULA E DIRIYAH SAUDI ARABIA**

Qualifying 1: Friday, 1600hrs-1650hrs, Eurosport 2  
Race 1: Friday, 1650hrs-1800hrs, Eurosport 2  
Race 2: Saturday, 1630hrs-1815hrs, Channel 4; 1650hrs-1800hrs, Eurosport 2



Formula E season is ready to kick off

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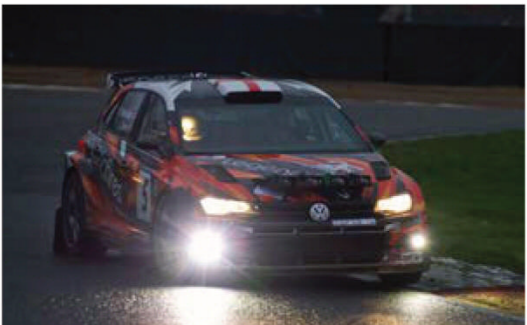
Gary Hill captured a flying Brian Watts at the Brands Hatch Stages



Bob Sketchley's classic car shot



Night fever, also by David Harbey



John Stone, from David Harbey



Gary Hill's shot of a sideways Ford

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## NEXT EDITION

## OUT THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3 2022

### EXCLUSIVE READERS' Q&A MIKE JORDAN



Tin-top battler, GT champion, ace engineer and Goodwood favourite tackles your questions

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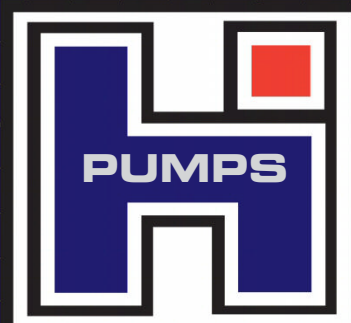


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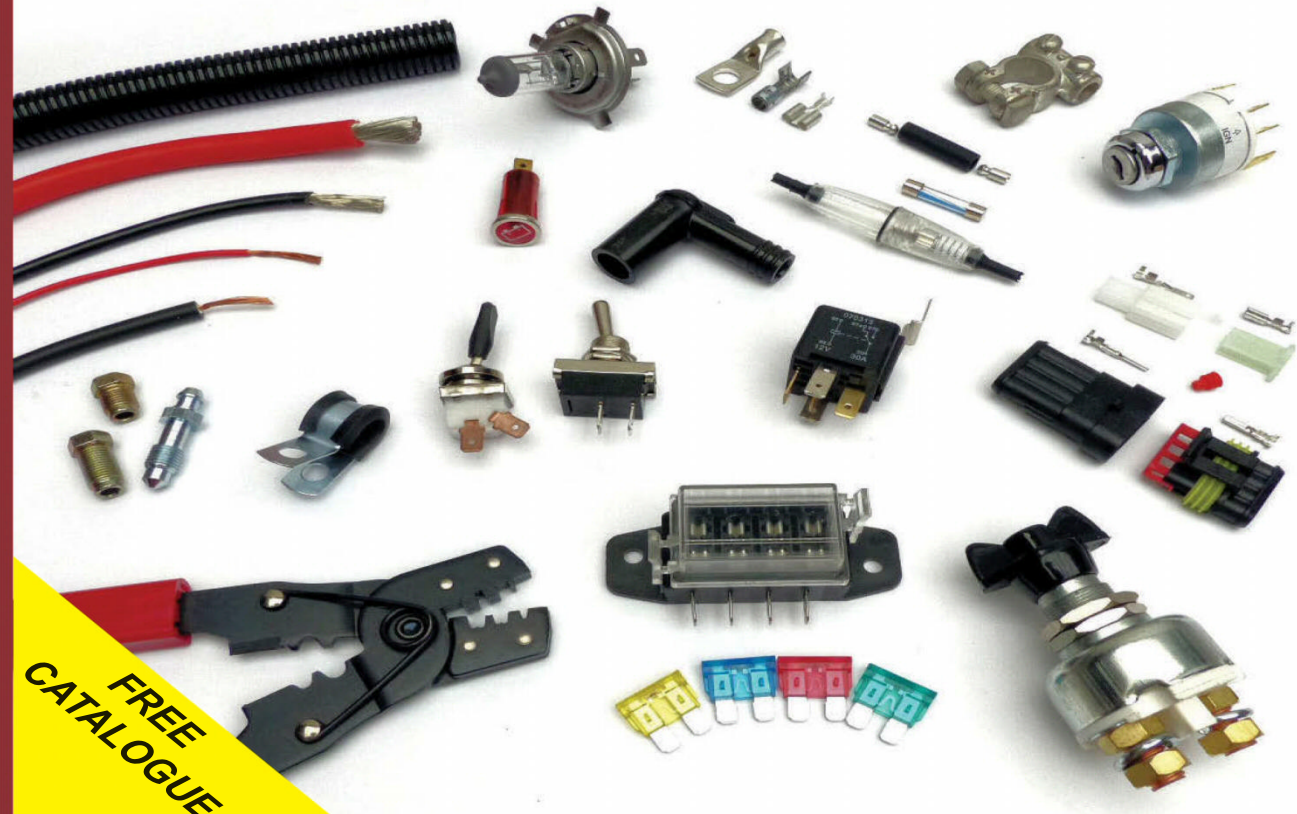


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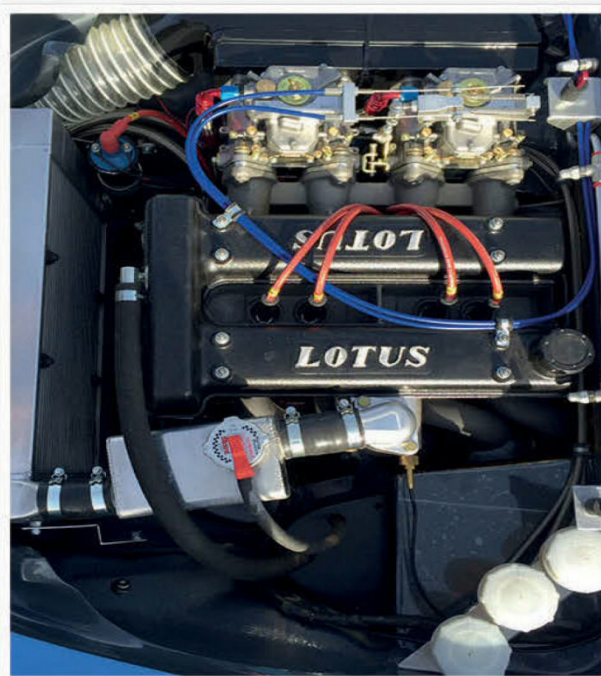
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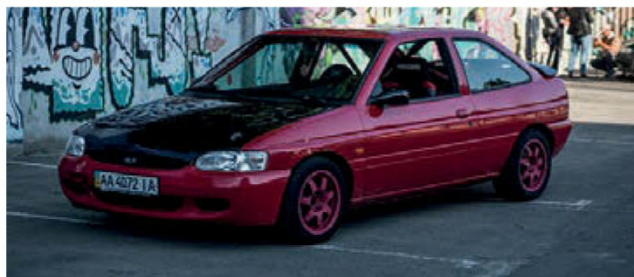
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\*Booking fee applies. Under 18s must be accompanied by an adult. All attractions are subject to change.  
See individual website for ticket closing dates. Warning motorsport can be dangerous.

**FAST**  
entertainment